



BENEMÉRITA

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FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**UNDERGRADUATE ELT STUDENTS' USE AND
AWARENESS OF READING STRATEGIES**

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By:

WENDY CONSTANZA PAREDES RAMOS

Thesis Director:

MTRA: GICELA CUATLAPANTZI PICHÓN

PUEBLA, PUE.

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This thesis has been read by the members of the thesis committee of:

WENDY CONSTANZA PAREDES RAMOS

And it is considered worthy of approval in partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of:

Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés



Thesis Director

Mtra. Gicela Cuatlapantzi Pichón



Committee member

Dra. Verónica Sánchez Hernández
Moreno



Committee member

Mtra. Eva Estefania Trujeque

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

JUNIO 2024

ABSTRACT

Reading in a second language has been provided to be a challenge for many language students. Therefore, the aims of this investigation were to know English Language Teaching undergraduate students' knowledge of reading strategies, which strategies they use before and while reading a text and how they use them. This study was a mixed method research hence a questionnaire and an interview were administered to students. The participants were undergraduate students selected from an ELT department of a public university in Mexico.

The research findings revealed that students were aware of their English level and therefore when faced with an unknown text they decided to use different reading strategies according to the aim for that text. They used not only the strategies they were taught at school but also new strategies that helped them to overcome difficulties when reading in English. It was also found what type of strategies they used before and while reading a text, likewise which strategies were the most used by students.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Introduction

When learning a second language one of the main skills taught at schools is reading. However, several students find that it is hard and difficult to complete a reading task. Reading is a complex process that requires comprehension of the text and it also requires to have a clear goal. Vocabulary, grammar and cognitive processes are some factors that sometimes can affect the comprehension process. Therefore, if students want to comprehend a text, they should use strategies that help them to achieve that goal.

Students that have the knowledge of strategies and monitor their progress in each text are named skilled readers. According to Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) these processes “are often referred to...as metacognition, which can be thought of as the knowledge readers’ cognition about reading and the self-control mechanisms they exercise when monitoring and regulating text comprehension” (p. 249).

Subsequently, in light of this problem, in this study it is not only my interest to investigate the strategies English Language Teaching students use before and while reading an academic text, but also, to find out how they overcome reading problems in their L2.

1.1 Rationale

I consider reading as a strategy that helped me develop my English skills, because of this, my interest on doing this research was to collect information about the students of a Public University who have to make use of reading in their degree. As an English Teaching student, I took subjects that required reading several texts. What I noticed in these classes was that some of my classmates did not understand the information presented in texts. When I asked them if they had the habit of reading in English or in Spanish, their answer was that they did not use to do it.

From what I noticed all of my classmates used some strategies; however, the ones that had major problems were the ones who used them more and tried to select the most appropriate one for the problem they were facing. Hence, this study investigates how students use reading strategies and if they are conscious of using them.

1.2 Location of Research

The study was carried in a Public University in Mexico. The city where it is located is near the center of the country and is one of the most important cities. The University has a language department where there are two undergraduate Language teaching programs. The Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching has a permanency from three to seven years in the program, the program offers English Language Teaching (ELT), linguistics and research subjects among other.

The need of reading for those areas was one of the reasons I choose this University to collect the data. After their first year, students have all their subjects in English and they have to read the material in English they want. Besides that, as a student in this Bachelor, I had easy access to the setting, and I am also familiar with the environment of the school. Lastly, reading in the L2 in this school is possible because the school facilitates the materials for students.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

As it was mentioned, reading in a second language is a complex process that involves the text, the reader, and previous knowledge from the reader along with an aim for the text. Therefore, the priority of this research was to investigate if students made use of reading strategies before and while reading a text. In addition, this study focussed on finding out how they choose the strategies to achieve their reading goal and, if students were aware of reading strategies and their use.

1.4 Research Aims

The principal aims of this research study are:

- To investigate the strategies students use before and while reading an academic text.
- To analyse how students, use the before and while reading strategies.
- To explore students' awareness of reading strategies.

-To analyse how students use those reading strategies.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions that lead this study are:

What reading strategies do ELT students employ or implement before and while they read a text? How do they use them?

Are students aware of the reading strategies? If so, how?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Different skills are involved in the process of reading, what is more, these skills are further involved in the process of reading in a second language in this case, English. This study is important since it adds to our understanding of reading strategies as a tool that can facilitate the improvement of reading skills in the ELT student.

This research could help teachers become aware of the importance of teaching reading strategies to students, especially students who they think have difficulties. It could also help teachers to consider that students need to be aware of these strategies to improve their English proficiency. With this in mind, students would benefit since this thesis provides strategies that other students used to fulfill their reading goal and that students who read this thesis can also use.

1.7 The Context of Research

For this investigation, a deeper research into the context of reading in a second language was necessary. Bearing this in mind, the research shows the related fields of the study in which it was supported. Therefore, the following areas of research related to my study are the following: Second Language Acquisition, reading materials, reading comprehension and reading strategies.

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, the issue of this study was stated by establishing the research questions which were concerned with exploring students' reading strategies awareness and reading students strategies. The aim of the study and the objectives were described. It was also mentioned the reason behind the study, the context where this project took place and the researcher's background.

The next chapters (Chapter II) will discuss the literature review of this research. Chapter III, will describe the methodology used in this research by describing the method, the students, the instruments, and the procedure that guided this project. In chapter IV, the research questions will be answered, and the results will be known. Finally, in Chapter V, the implications of the research project and recommendations for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, firstly, I will explain some information about second language acquisition and theories of second language acquisition. Secondly, some literature review about reading, reading in a second language, reading comprehension, the difference between reading skills and strategies, metacognitive reading strategies and reading strategies will be provided. Finally, some previous studies related to this investigation together with the conclusion will be explained.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition

Language has been a tool of communication between people. It is a very complex process that it is acquire since the moment we are born. Therefore, the acquisition of a second language is another different process. According to Hoque (2017), second language acquisition (SLA) refers to "the systematic study of how people learn a language other than their mother tongue" (p.1). It means that the difference between the first language or mother tongue and the second language is that the last one requires a more conscious process. Since SLA requires "a wide range of language learning setting and learner characteristics and circumstances" (Saville 2017, p. 5), it has been discovered that different theories to the study of SLA have been developed.

2.1.1 Theories of Second Language Acquisition

The study of how a non-native person can acquire or learn another language has been of great interest for researchers all over the world. Numerous theories have been created to understand the factors that occur when a language is learned. This is why Lightbown and Spada (1999) have selected four theories which can explain how learners can acquire a second language.

Behaviourism

The focus of this theory is based mainly on repetition. Lightbown & Spada (1999) had stated that “behaviourists account for learning in terms of imitation, practice, reinforcement (or feedback on success), and habit formation” (Lightbown & Spada, p.35). This means that the learner has to be close to native speakers; therefore, the second language is going to develop through the habits of listening, repeating the language and receiving positive feedback. However, some behaviourists argue that some problems in the second language “starts off with the habits formed in the first language and that these habits interfere with the new ones needed for the second one” (Lado 1964 cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 35).

Innatism

According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), universal grammar is a theory developed by Chomsky, which was elaborated to explain the first

language acquisition. The hypothesis of this theory is based on the “innate knowledge of the principles of Universal Grammar” that “permits all children to acquire the language of their environment, during a critical period in their development” (p. 36). However, “some linguistics working within this theory have argued that Universal Grammar offers the best perspective from which to understand second language acquisition” (ibid). Meanwhile others argue that the main point of this theory is the critical period and that adult learners have passed this requirement.

The critical period is a hypothesis which researchers have stated that a foreign language can be naturally acquired like a native only in a certain *period* of life. Period refers to the age in which a person learns the second language. “Natural and complete acquisition of a language can occur only between the ages of two and puberty, also children and adults acquire the language differently” (Krashen, Sferlazza et al. 1976 cited in Gürsoy 2011, p.757)

Krashen’s ‘Monitor Model’

In 1982 Stephen Krashen proposed a theory which he called “monitor model”. This theory turned out to be a very influential one to second language acquisition studies. In his proposal he mentioned five hypotheses: (1) the acquisition-learning hypothesis; (2) the monitor hypothesis; (3) the natural order hypothesis; (4) the input hypothesis; and (5) the affective filter

hypothesis (p.38). Afterward these 5 hypotheses will be explained according to Lightbown & Spade (1999).

1) The acquisition-learning hypothesis: “there are two ways for adult learners to approach learning a second language: they may acquire it or they may learn it” (p.38) in this theory he bases on the hypothesis that anything that is learned, especially in a classroom, cannot turn in acquisition, that means the production of anything related to a second language will not be automatic as in the first language.

2) The monitor hypothesis: for this theory Krashen states “that the acquired system acts to initiate the speaker’s utterances and is responsible for fluency and intuitive judgements about correctness” (p.38). In the same way he proposed for the learned system that it “acts only as an editor or ‘monitor’, making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced” (p.38).

3) The natural order hypothesis: Krashen states that “the natural order is independent of the order in which rules have been learned in language class” (p.39). This means that learners of a second language acquire “features of the target language in predictable sequences” (ibid)

4) The input hypothesis: according to Krashen, the learners for this theory, acquired a second language only when they are exposed to comprehensible input. “If the input contains forms and structures just

beyond the learner's current level of competence in the language then both comprehension and acquisition will occur" (p.39).

5) The affective filter hypothesis: for the acquisition of the second language, Krashen states that an "affective filter" is responsible for the learning. This filter is created based on attitudes, emotional state, needs and motives, which according to Krashen can 'affect' the acquisition. This imaginary barrier or filter can be divided in two; "it will be 'up' (blocking input) when the learner is stressed, self-conscious, or unmotivated" and "it will be 'down' when the learner is relaxed and motivated". (pp. 39, 40)

Recent Psychological Theories

Information processing is a theory that refers, according to cognitive psychologists, to the build-up of knowledge for a second language that can be used automatically for speaking and understanding the language (Lightbown & Spada 1999). Researchers point out that at the beginning learners have to pay attention to every aspect of the language they try to learn. Then with practice and experience, they start to use certain parts of the language automatically and quickly (ibid). One recognized theorist is Richard Schmidt, who mentions that there is no difference between acquisition and learning.

Connectionism: Researchers point out that learners gradually build-up their knowledge through exposure to different instances of the language. Connectionists think that the environment in which the learner receives

knowledge is of great importance. For them the learner develops stronger mental or neurological 'connections' between elements after hearing language features in specific contexts over and over again (Lightbown & Spada 1999).

The interactionist position: Interactionists argue that the acquisition of a second language depends more on the opportunity that learners have to interact with native speakers, using a comprehensible input and is this conversational interaction which makes possible the acquisition. Vygotsky's theory also proposes the idea that language development is formed by the social interaction between individuals (Lightbown & Spada 1999).

2.2 Reading

Reading a message, an advertisement, a book or another type of reading text in the mother tongue is usually thought as understanding the printed words in the text and that is also an act that requires minimal effort. However, different authors such as Anderson (1999), Smith (1980) or Wallace (1993) have stated that reading is a more complex act that requires different skills in order to understand a text.

For Anderson (1999) reading is not a static process because it requires that the reader and the reading material work together in order to build meaning. He sustains the idea that this building is formed by the reader's previous information and the information contained in the text. "A synergy occurs in reading which combines the words on the printed page with the

reader's background knowledge and experiences" (p. 1). He also points out another important factor, the reader moves "through the printed text with specific purposes in mind to accomplish specific goals" (p. 1).

Similarly, to Anderson, Smith (1980) points out that the definition of reading is not complete if it is only explained as extracting information from a text. This author states that while reading can be interpreted as extracting information, much of this information is something we do not want or get.

Therefore, Smith explains that reading is also paying attention only to the information that is most relevant to our purposes; it means that the extracted information is very selective. Hence, he thinks that reading is "asking questions of printed text. And reading with comprehension becomes a matter of getting your questions answered" (p. 105).

In the same way, Wallace (1993) suggests that a reader should be aware of the way in which the language is used. She says that language is used for a purpose and that it only makes sense in context.

2.2.1 Reading in a Second or Foreigner Language

Reading in a language includes different knowledge or abilities that work together in order to get the reader to comprehend and get the meaning of the text. The awareness of what is being read and how reading works, the ability to read in the first language or the conscious or unconscious thinking

of what is done when reading, are some of the elements involved in reading in a second language (Aebersold 1997).

Therefore, some researchers have expressed their point of view of what reading in a foreigner or second language means.

Nuttall (1982) points out that the act of reading in a second language is a process that can be composed of different stages in which we use different skills. For example, in the early stages of reading, a student can focus his or her attention in decoding, deciphering or identifying the words or sentences in a text. "Unless we can correctly recognize the words we meet in print, we cannot even begin to read" (p. 2).

Likewise, authors such as Alderson (2000) also mentions that even if the reader deciphers the words and sentences from a text he also 'thinks' about other aspects that are present when reading:

...what he is reading: what it means to him, how it relates to other things he knows, to what he expects to come next in texts like this. He is presumably thinking about how useful, entertaining, boring, crazy the text is. He may be consciously reflecting on the difficulties or ease he is experiencing when reading and on ways of overcoming the difficulties or of continuing the pleasure. He may be completely unconscious of how he is reading, and of what is happening around him: he may be fully absorbed in 'reading' (p. 3).

According to Gamboa (2017) other aspects that are involved in reading in a FL are the differences between writing systems and sounds or the lack of knowledge and competence in the FL. She also points out the problems that may arise with the code which is basically vocabulary and grammar,

two aspects that most second language readers have troubles with. Finally, she mentions the absence or shortage of a cultural context from which the reader can build meaning.

Nonetheless reading in a second language differs from the first language and in many occasions, it represents a difficult act for non-native speakers. Regardless of the learners' proficiency level some authors pointed out that reading implies a high level of cognitive and perceptual abilities that interface with memory what makes reading a complex ability. There is also the difficulty of text analysis because it points toward analysing what we read and its relation to how we read (Alderson 2000).

2.2.2 Reading Comprehension

Having the capacity to read a text is not the same as understanding it. Thus, comprehension of a text is important for every reader if he wants to acquire information for different purposes.

Reading comprehension is defined as the reciprocal action that occurs between the reader and the text where the reader brings information that he already possesses in an attempting to construct meaning. "Readers filter the text through their own background knowledge, biases and other predispositions that affect how they interpret the text" (p. 2). Therefore, what one reader infers from a text may or may not be similar to what other reader constructed from the same text.

Another common definition of reading comprehension is that it is "the process of making connection between the new information in the text and the known information in the reader's head" (p. 4). For this process to take place, it is necessary that the reader makes use of strategies to connect the information of the text with their own background knowledge. The result is the addition of new information to one's background knowledge or to make modifications to what one already knows leading to new learning or comprehension.

Background knowledge: researchers have found that readers' background knowledge affects how well they can comprehend a text. It is especially important in cases where the reader needs to infer the meaning of the text he is. This is reading because the information that is not directly presented in the text needs to be inferred with his own background information.

Therefore, the meaning that the reader has found or created is more elaborated than if he had only read the text passively without giving it more meaning than the one found on the text.

According to Grabe, the definition of what is reading comprehension can be:

"Reading comprehension involves abilities to recognize words rapidly and efficiently, develop and use a very large recognition vocabulary, process sentences in order to build comprehension, engage a range of strategic processes and underlying cognitive skills... interpret meaning in relation to background knowledge, interpret and evaluate texts in line with reader goals and purposes, and process texts fluently over an extended period of time" (p.8)

This means that all of the reader's knowledge is put into practice at the same time and the comprehension process is especially achieved when the reader fulfils a goal or task. For Gretell (cited in Acero, 2000, p.11) "understanding a written text means extracting the required information efficiently". This definition also gives the idea that the comprehension is possible when the reader has a purpose for a text and needs to understand it for a specific reason.

In conclusion, reading comprehension involves more participation from the reader than just deciphering words or letters. It also involves making decisions, solving problems and using background knowledge altogether in an attempt to understand the text he is reading.

Another important point that different authors stated when talking about reading comprehension, is that readers have different reasons for reading which can influence the reading result. Grabe (2014) stated that "one of the most important factors in reading comprehension abilities is how the reading process varies depending on the reading purpose" (p. 10).

2.3 Differences between Reading Skills and Reading Strategies

Various researchers (Acero 2000; Grabe 2009; O'Reilly and McNamara 2007) have stated that the use of reading skills or strategies have shown a positive impact on the reading comprehension and academic achievement. Reading skills and reading strategies are necessary tools to achieve the reader's purpose for a text. Therefore, it is important that second language

readers are taught reading skills and strategies that could help them to improve reading comprehension and as a result understand a text.

Garner (p. 250, in Mokhtari & Reichard 2002) mentions that reading strategies facilitate reading comprehension. Paris, Lipson and Wixon (in Mokhtari & Reichard 2002) state that reading strategies should be learned to the point to automaticity by readers to finally become skills. However, when readers use the reading strategies these may or may not be equally effective for the understanding. This is because different factors can affect the comprehension such as the kind of text, the strategy they used, the purpose or aim of the reader and the context.

Cohen (1990, cited in Acero 2000) has suggested a difference between skills and strategies. For him, a skill is a behaviour or a type of behaviour while a strategy is the specific way for realizing that behaviour. This is explained with an example by Acero (2000) who says that scanning is considered a skill while looking for a date or a number in a text is what it would be called a strategy.

Carrell (1989) also suggests a definition for strategy, it “refers to deliberate actions that learners or readers select and control to achieve desired goals or objects” (p. 129). She also points out a difference between reading skills and strategies. Carrell states that strategies are abilities which “emphasize the reader’s active participation” while skills are abilities which are not activated and become passive abilities (p. 129).

Afflerbach et al. (2008) also searched for a distinction between reading skills and strategies. For them, the most important point to consider when making the distinction between the two of them is to determine whether the reader's actions are under automatic or deliberated control. For a definition of skill, they mention that it is the result of "the proficiency of a complex act" while for a strategy it is a "conscious and systematic plan" (p. 365). They carry out deeper research in which they mention that readers that want to develop their reading comprehension make use first of reading strategies. They point out that reading strategies are "deliberate, goal-direct attempts to control and modify the reader's effort to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text" (p. 368). This means that the reader in his effort to understand a text he selects which strategies are the most appropriated for that text in order to achieve his goal. Then, he monitors its effectiveness and revise if their aims were achieved or not. These actions are what they considered as reading strategy the "deliberate, conscious, metacognitive act" (p. 368).

In addition, Afflerbach et al. (2008) refer to skills as the "automatic actions that result in decoding and comprehension with speed, efficiency, and fluency and usually occur without awareness of the components or control involved" (p. 368). In other words, skills are automatic actions that the reader use with less deliberated attention mainly because the reader evaluates them before, as strategies, and the unconscious and quickly use of them is what make the principal distinction between strategies and skills.

Similarly, to what Carrell (1989) mentioned, strategies emphasize the reader's participation; this means that, the reader takes control of what he is going to choose. However, skills are passive abilities that do not require a conscious participation of the reader.

2.3.1 Metacognitive Reading Strategies (Metacognition and Reading)

The role that metacognition has in reading comprehension has been studied by different authors. Van Kraayenoord (2010) has investigated the role of metacognition in reading comprehension and mentioned the investigations of diverse researchers. According to Van Kraayenoord (2010), metacognition is referred as the understanding of knowledge about cognition and the regulation of this. In other words, readers are aware of the strategies they used before, during and after reading a text to understand it. She also explains that Favell and Brown (in Van Kraayenoord 2010) have investigated metacognition and their work provided a better understanding about readers' knowledge about their cognition and how it impacted on their self-regulation.

According to Flavell (1979), metacognitive knowledge refers to the knowledge of self, which refers to the actions that a learner uses to achieve his aim to also acquire the expertise of what it is learned; knowledge of aspects of the task and of strategy use. Self-knowledge also consists of metacognitive monitoring which is the evaluation of the cognitive activity and of metacognitive control which consist of the regulation of the cognitive

activity. In other words, a reader needs to be aware of the purpose of the reading.

When students read they have a purpose in mind; as explained before the purposes depended on their goal. Thus, to accomplish their objective students make use of a variety of reading skills or strategies. However, students cannot use all the strategies at the same time, they have to know which are appropriated to achieve their aim. This is what researchers call metacognition. Know their own knowledge is a simple definition for this term. Nonetheless researchers have found that knowing what strategies are is part of what students do when they use them. Students who are aware of the use of reading strategies tell apart which ones are useful for each purpose, and they evaluate these strategies to use the most helpful one (Lahuerta, 2016).

Lahuerta (2016) also mentions that learners who make use of metacognition develop an “insightful belief about language learning process, their own abilities and the use of effective strategies that may compensate for possible weakness” (p.110). Thus, this makes a positive impact on the learning process of students turning them into initiators of their own learning. Furthermore, Baker and Brown (1984 cited in Van Kraayenoord 2010) pointed out that while reading good readers are aware of the difficulties they face when reading. On the contrary, poor readers are less aware of this and focus on decoding the text more than understanding it.

Mokhtari & Reichard (2002) also agrees with the fact that one characteristic of skilled readers is their awareness and the monitoring of their comprehension processes. This is the characteristic that several authors have called metacognition. This process is usually described as the type of reading strategies the reader chooses in order to fulfil an aim with the text they are reading (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002, p.249).

Flavell (in Mokhtari & Reichard 2002) described metacognition as an “occurring through the actions and interactions of four classes or interrelated phenomena: Metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, goals (or tasks), and actions (or strategies)” (p.1). In the same way Presley and Afflerbach (in Mokhtari & Reichard 2002) organized some important points about what skilled readers tend to do: they are aware of what they are reading, they are aware of why they are reading, they have an idea or plan about how to read and comprehend the information, also they tend to think how to handle potential problems (p.249).

Paris and Winograd (in Mokhtari & Reichard 2002, p.250) mention that metacognition promotes and motivates the academic learning in students. They highlight that “the idea is that students can enhance their learning by becoming aware of their own thinking as they read, write, and solve problems at school” (p.250). It means that if students try to solve a problem, in this case a reading problem. So, they become more confident

and knowledgeable about how to overcome obstacles and in the process; they gain more and become more skilful.

Rodriguez and Rodriguez (2009) also mention that students who make use of reading strategies “decide on how to read, taking into account their own objectives plus the characteristics of the text” (p.3). Supporting this comment, Castello said (in Rodriguez & Rodriguez 2009 p.2) “the fact of having learning strategies involves making decisions intentionally and voluntarily about how to behave in order to achieve”.

Solé (in Rodriguez and Rodriguez 2009) mentions that students tend to plan how to achieve their goals, “how to evaluate them and a possible change.” (p.3). Adding to this, he explains that reading strategies are “considered high order procedures where cognition and metacognition processes play an important role” (p.3). Furthermore, Rodriguez and Rodriguez (2009) explain that a reason for this is that “comprehension strategies in reading include preparing, organizing, elaborating, and monitoring” (p.3). However, they emphasize that “...cognitive and metacognitive processes are hard to be observed and measured” (p.4).

2.3.2 Reading Strategies

Reading in a second language is always a hard task for students. There are several factors that hinder the comprehension of a text, some of the most common are: limited vocabulary, difficulty of the text, previous knowledge etc. In order to fulfil a goal with a reading, students make us of

strategies which specialize in making the reading efficiently and effectively. According to Oxford and Crookall (1989, p.404), reading strategies are also referred as: “learning techniques, behaviours, or actions; or learning-to-learn, problem-solving, or studying skills.” This is because they help in different studying areas and aid to different purposes.

Reading strategies for a second language have more specific details for the purpose of the text. Scarcella and Oxford (in Tsung-Yuan 2002 p.3) said that reading strategies are “specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques-such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task-used by students to enhance their own learning”.

Likewise, reading strategies used in a second language have more specific points to consider to use for the purpose of understanding a text. Scarcella and Oxford (in Tsung-Yuan 2002, p.3) said that reading strategies in a second language are “specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques-such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task-used by students to enhance their own learning”. They also emphasise that the strategies must be controlled by the learner. Also, Tsung-Yuan add that in the L2 learners must be able to take complete control over the strategies will help him or her in their own learning process.

To complement this definition, Holec (1981), Dickinson (1987), Allwright (1990), and Little-wood (1996) (in Tsung-yuan 2002, p.3) suggest that learners that present an autonomy when reading usually complete the tasks with little or no assistance. They adapt to the situation, and they make good use of the reading strategies. Another point that they mention is the social interaction of the learner, which implicates using his or her social skills to ask questions to clarify or verify information, ask for help or collaborate with others.

Oxford and Ehrman (in Tsung-Yuan 2002, p.3) say that L2 readers select and combine strategies intentionally and they choose the ones they consider the most relevant to their goal and to their own learning style.

Academics have discussed the reading strategies that should be taught to second language students, and they also have come with their own categories. Kitao (in Acero 2000) suggest two categories: **word and text level strategies**. Word level refers to the strategies used for individual words or phrases. For text level he mentions those which are used to understand the text or a large part of it which can include background knowledge, surveying the text and making predictions, skimming and looking for the organization of a passage.

Reading strategies that are taught mainly at schools are a lot, and to simplify the diversity of strategies Mokhari and Reichard (2002) made three categories of strategies which are: **Global reading strategies, Problem-**

solving-Strategies and Support Reading Strategies. According to them, these strategies “provide the support mechanisms aimed at sustaining responses to reading” (p.4), in other words, the strategies on these categories provide, each one a specific help to fulfil a reading goal.

These categories were created based on the comments of students that used “while reading academic or school-related materials such as textbooks, library materials, and magazine articles” (p4). Global reading strategies refer to the strategies that make a “global analysis of the text”. Some of them are the following:

...setting purpose for reading, activating prior knowledge, checking whether text content fits purpose, predicting what text is about, confirming predictions, previewing text for content, skimming to note text characteristics, making decisions in relation to what to read closely, using context clues, using text structure, and using other textual features to enhance reading comprehension. (p. 11)

Problem-solving strategies are the ones, as the name says, used when students face difficulties with the reading. These strategies help them to “navigate through the text skilfully or...when problems develop in understanding textual information” (p.4). Examples of these strategies are: *“reading slowly and carefully, adjusting reading rate, paying close attention to reading, pausing to reflect on reading, rereading, visualizing information read, reading text out loud, and guessing meaning of unknown words”.* (p.11)

Finally, support reading strategies refer to the strategies that are not reference material. These could be taking notes, highlight and others that “might be described as functional or support strategies” (p4). The strategies mentioned for this group are: *“taking notes while reading, paraphrasing text information, revisiting previously read information, asking self-questions, using reference materials as aids, underlining text information, discussing reading with others, and writing summaries of reading”* (p.11).

Pressley and Afflerbach (in Mokhatari 2002, p.1) mention that proficient readers usually approach the text with a reading plan. They mentioned some actions these readers made:

...they tend to be aware of what they are reading; they seem to know why they are reading; and they have a set of tentative plans or strategies for handling potential problems and for monitoring their comprehension of textual information.

Rodriguez and Rodriguez (2009) have made use of the comprehension strategies found by Gunning (2000); preparational, organizational, elaboration, and monitor strategies. They organized them into **before, during and after reading strategies** (p 6). They have made this classification because they think that students make use of this strategies in different times of the reading.

Shehu (2015) explains in detail the strategies found by Gunning (2000): **Preparational strategies** which are the ones that active prior knowledge about a certain topic and help students to think about the topic

they are about to read. One of the most important strategies in this area is “predict the text”. **Organizational strategies** are the ones in which the main idea and topic is identified, classification of information, decide the relevant information, sequencing and summarizing, this means that they process and select important details from which they make different relationships. **Elaboration strategies** means that relationship between the text and the reader’s background knowledge are created about the topic. To name some of the most important types are: making inferences, picturing images and asking questions. Finally, **monitoring strategies** are when the reader is aware of his own mental process when reading. It means the reader think about what he understood or not about the text and decide to use the other three types of strategies (p.2-3).

Combination and application of skills refers to the reader’s ability to recognize the relationship between the text and external facts along with their own knowledge. Therefore, as suggested by Acero (2000), readers’ use of reading strategies should allow them to distinguish between: factual and non-factual information; important and unimportant aspects, and supporting details; relevant and irrelevant information; explicit and implicit information, ideas, examples and opinions; certainty, probability, possibility, necessity and finally with causes, effects, purposes, conditions.

Finally, Oxford and Crookall (1989) mention that learners from all language levels make use of reading strategies; however, some of them are

unaware of the strategy they are using and do not take advantage of all the strategies available making the search of the relationship between the use of strategies and the proficiency of it a complex investigation (p.11-12).

Many different strategies can be used by good learners: techniques for organizing, for focusing and evaluating learning, for handling emotions and attitudes, for co-operating with others in the learning process, for linking new information with existing schemata, and for directly engaging in learning use (p12).

2.4 Previous Studies Related to this Study

The reading strategies awareness among English as a second language (ESL) learners in Malaysia's University by Abdul A, Ab Rahim et al. (2011).

The research aimed to measure the awareness level of reading strategies of English as Second Language (ESL) learners in the University Technology MARA, Penang. The study included the learners' perceived use of reading strategies while reading academic materials. Researchers used an instrument of the Survey of Reading (SORS) which consists of three broad categories of reading strategies namely: Global Reading strategies (aimed at setting the stage for reading; setting purpose for reading, making predictions etc.), Problem-Solving Strategies (used when problems develop in understanding textual information; checking one's understanding on encountering conflicting information or rereading for better understanding etc.) and Support Strategies (which provide the support mechanisms aimed at sustaining responses to reading; use of reference materials such as dictionaries and other support systems). The items in the questionnaire

were used to indicate the extend of awareness to which the surveyed perceived themselves to be using the described strategy while reading.

For the study, they used 60 subjects where sixty percent were males and forty percent females with an age between nineteen to twenty-one years old. The questionnaire used was of thirty selected-response items, which was rated based on a five-point (1-never, 5-always) Likert scale that provided an ordinal scale measurement. The data collected was computed and analysed using the SPSS 11, the individual scores that were grouped together according to their sub-scale category Global reading strategies (13 items), Problem solving strategies (9 items) and Support strategies (8 items) were recorded and added up to obtain the total score for the entire instruments. The statistical procedures used in the study were descriptive-statistics. Frequency, percentage, mean and mode were carried out on all the responses of the sixty samples of which frequency and percentage were used to determine the level of awareness of the preferred reading strategies, while mean and mode were used to determine the sub-scales and frequency of reading strategy awareness as perceived by the respondents.

The result of the data for the awareness of reading strategies employed showed a 70% of the respondents showing a moderate usage of GLOB strategies, a 23.3% using a high usage and 6.7% showed a lack of awareness of reading techniques. The results showed that the majority of the surveyed are able to monitor, manage and are aware of those techniques. For the

Problem-solving strategies 65% of the participants showed a higher level of awareness in applying these strategies and the mean score for the lower awareness of such strategies was of only one participant which represents the 1.7%. The Support reading strategies results showed that 51.6% is the media of the total of participants that are aware of these strategies. 31.7% shows the high mean scores while the 16.7% shows the low mean score.

Finally, researchers applied a t-test to conclude the analysis and observation made on validity and reliability of the levels of awareness of reading strategies. The results presented a mean 3.18 for Global strategies, which indicate that the respondents are consistent with the use of these strategies. For Problem-solving strategies, a mean of 3.59 showed that readers are active readers and thinkers, therefore they are involved in the actions and procedures in working directly with the text they read. Lastly a mean of 3.17 for the Support strategies indicates that readers also make a high use of these strategies.

As a conclusion, researchers found out that learners are aware of some reading strategies while their level of awareness may differ from one student to other. It also showed that readers' preference for one strategy to other is because the ability to read and understand the materials, together with their purpose varies. Also, that a lower level of awareness and strategy use could be related to low ability readers and that high-ability readers make use of a variety of reading strategies such as re-reading, main ideas

detection, meaning-analysis through context etc. Likewise, it showed that readers are more concern with comprehension hence, problem-solving strategies was the one they used more. The findings allowed to show that it is advantageous to inculcate students the awareness of reading strategies, especially the ones that enhance reading comprehension which could help them with academic material and tasks on a daily basis.

EFL Learners Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies (Al-Mekhlafi, 2018)

The study investigated how frequently EFL learners studying in higher education institutions think they use selected EFL reading strategies. The study, as his author indicates, is a think-aloud research procedure for detecting actual strategy use. The instrument used was the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI), which measures how readers frequently think they use selected reading strategies, test and in addition, a "Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS)", which further includes translation-related strategies, was also applied. To report the items a Likert scale of 1 (low) to 5(high) was used in both instruments on a sample of 74 tertiary level EFL learners of a public school in the Sultanate of Oman. Both tests are divided in three sub-categories; global, problem-solving and support strategies with all them composed of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

To answer the first question (What are the most frequently used reading strategies of Omani EFL learners?) the reading strategies were calculated according to means and standard deviation. Support reading strategies showed the highest mean of the three sub-categories, with 3.4815, followed by problem-solving strategies with 3.3630 and finally global reading strategies with 3.3146. For the category of global reading strategies, the items readers mostly use are the following three: 'I have a purpose in mind when I read' with 3.61, 'I think about what I know to help me understand what I read' with 3.58 and with 3.56 'I try to guess what the material is about when I read'. Also, the items with the lowest scores were 'I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose' and 'I critically analyse and evaluate the information presented in the text' with 2.94 and 2.81 respectively. The two highest items for problem-solving strategies are 'I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading' with 3.74 and 'I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases' with 3.58 were noticed. On the contrary 'I try to get back on track when I lose concentration' and 'When the text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading' with 3.15 and 3.07 respectively were the two lowest items of this category. Finally, for support reading strategies the highest items were; 'I use reference material, such as a dictionary to help me understand what I read' and 'I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it' with 3.90 and 3.74 respectively. According to the

author this confirms other researchers' investigations about that there is moderate or high level of reading strategy use by readers.

An independent sample test was used to answer the second research question (Are there significant differences in EFL learners' use of selected reading strategies in terms of the learners' gender?). It showed the existence of a significant difference on the use of reading strategies between males and females, being females the most favoured with a 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 3.56 while males obtain a 3.31 mean. Additionally, it presented that females showed a predominant use of problem- solving and support strategies with 3.69 and 3.71 respectively compared to males with 3.44 and 3.23 respectively. However, the author points out that the difference is no significant because both reveal a high use of both strategies with a mean of 3.39 for females and 3.28 for males.

Finally, for the third question (Are there any significant differences in EFL learners' use of selected reading strategies in terms of learners' English proficiency level?), a Chaffe test was employed and a One-Way analysis of variance ANOVA was used. The results showed that there are no significant differences in using different reading strategies of the three categories among learners of different languages levels. It was observed that there is a generally high use of the reading strategies while also it was noted these conclusions. First, advanced level students use more strategies in the three level than those at the elementary or intermediate level, second, that

intermediate level students use more support and problem- solving reading strategies than those of the elementary level, and that the latter employed more global reading strategies than the former. Finally, it was concluded that the higher the students' language level is, the more they use support and problem-solving strategies. The findings reported that there is a high use of the three types of reading strategies by Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced level EFL students.

Metacognitive Awareness of Academic reading strategies (Yüksel, 2011)

The study was designed to determine the Turkish university students' metacognitive awareness of academic reading strategies. Researchers used the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) test which measures students' metacognitive awareness of Global, Problem-solving and Support reading strategies used in academic reading. A total of sixteen Turkish students participated in the study, they were L2 English learners who were attending an English Language Teaching program. The test consisted of twenty-eight items and were evaluated using a Linkert of a five-point scale ranging from 1 (I never do this) to 5 (I always do this). The total of items was divided in thirteen for Global strategies, eight for Problem-Solving strategies and nine items for Support strategies.

To obtain the mean, standard deviation values and percentages a SPSS 15.0 data analysis was applied for the descriptive statistical procedures. The mean scores for each frequency were: never (1 to 1,79),

rarely (1,80 to 2,59) sometimes (2,60 to 3,39) usually (3,40 to 4,19) and always (4,20 to 5). After evaluating the means and frequencies of the reading strategies for each category, the result for the overall mean value of individual strategies was 3,70 which indicates, according to the mean scores, that students *usually* make use of reading strategies.

The result showed that out the sixteen participants, the highest percentages showed that 34% usually use reading strategies while a 28% always make use of the strategies. The lower percentages of 6% for never and 7% for rarely implied that students were mostly aware of the strategies. From the three categories, Problem-solving strategies was the most used with 3,91 followed by Global reading strategies with 3,74 and finally Supporting strategies with 3,45. For Global strategies "Previewing text before reading" was the highest item with a mean of 4,50 and was reported as "always" as response. For Problem-solving strategies "Adjusting reading rate" (4,25) and "Re-reading for better understanding" (4,37) were the highest items. Finally, for Support reading strategies "Summarizing text information" (4,50) was the highest item for this category.

According to the literature, the predominant use of Problem-solving strategies was preferred because students paid attention to comprehension. The most used strategies were "Guessing unknown words from context", "Re-reading for better understanding", "Adjusting reading rate" and "Paying close attention to reading". The most used strategy of Global reading

strategies was "prior knowledge" to know about the context of the text. The least used were support reading strategies because it refers to the use of mechanisms or tools required to clarify text information (dictionaries, reading aloud, going back and forth, etc.) therefore students find difficult to use strategies that consume too much time.

The conclusion presented was that students make use of reading strategies and that they were fully aware of them, thus students had a high metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, being Problem-solving one of the most used strategies when reading an academic text.

L2 Students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and its relationship to reading comprehension (Lahuerta, 1993).

The purpose of the study was to analyse the ideas of non-native students about certain strategies and their potential effectiveness. Some of the ideas that the study investigated was the beliefs about their weaknesses and strengths and their self-concept as learners. A descriptive study was carried out to analyse students' perceived ability to read in English and about the strategies they consider effective and tend to focus on reading effectively.

To analyse the relationship between students' judgements about the effectiveness of the various reading strategies and their reading, an empirical study was realised. To elicit the relevant information, a questionnaire was administered. It consisted of three groups of statements

of which the first is related to students' perceived reading ability in the target language. It includes six questions about good reading behaviour techniques and resources: predicting or guessing, what comes next in the text, anticipation or the use of previous knowledge and experience to understand the context, recognition of the text, distinguishing between main and supporting details, relating information which comes next in the text to previous information, assessing and evaluating the text, being aware of the writer's intention, his point of view and about if they have a good sense of when they understand something or not.

The second group is related to readers' resources to face problems and solve them during reading. It consisted of five items concerning what subjects do when they do not understand something, if they use some repair strategies or give up and stop reading. The last seventeen statements are about what the readers do to read effectively and about reading behaviours of good readers. From these categories the focus was on strategies related to reading comprehension such as phonetic, pronunciation or sound-letter aspects, word-level aspects of meaning, sentence and syntactic decoding, text content, textual meaning or textual gist, background knowledge and textual organization.

The questionnaire had a total of twenty-eight statements about silent reading strategies in English, which was measured using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) because the researcher did not

want the results were affected by the language level proficiency (low) in the second language. The test was administered to eighty-eight students in their native language (Spanish).

To obtain the descriptive and correlational statistics based on the data, a statistical program SPSS for Windows 6.0 was used. Therefore, the results of the study where the following: for the first six items which correspond to the ability item group, 53.4% of the readers agreed that when reading silently in English, they were able to anticipate the difference between main points and supporting details while the 11.6% disagreed with this statement.

For the next statement that was “when reading silently in English I was able to relate information which comes next in the text to previous information”, 61.7% agree while 7% disagree. A 74.7% agreed that they were able to use their prior knowledge and experience to understand the content of the text they were reading while 21.8% strongly agreed. Also, 95.4% of readers stated that they had a good sense when they understood something and when they did not, from this a 62.1% strongly agreed. For statement four, 36.1% agreed at the statement "when reading silently in English I am able to question the significance or truthfulness of what the author says" while 20.9% disagreed. Finally, for the statement "when reading silently in English, I was able to anticipate what would come next in the text" 4.7% disagreed while 11.6% strongly disagreed.

The statements 7 to 11, which cover the repair strategies or what they do when they do not understand something, 80.4% said they kept on reading hoping for clarification further on, 71.2% said that they reread the problematic part, 66.3% said they went back to a point before the problematic part, 60.4% affirmed that they looked up unknown words in the dictionary, and finally 52.3% strongly disagreed and 31.4% disagreed that when they did not understand something they gave up and stopped reading.

The statements for strategies that students tended to focus on in order to read more effectively, which are from 12 to 20, showed the following results: 94.1% tended to focus on getting the overall meaning of the text, 60.7% tended to focus on relating the text to what they already knew about the topic, 59.8% tended to focus on understanding the meaning of each word and 47% tended to focus on looking up words in the dictionary. Also, 69.5% did not focus on reading effectively on mentally sounding out parts of the text and 66.2% disagreed with being able to pronounce each whole word. For the statements of using the organization of the text (42.2%), the grammatical structures (41%) and focusing on the details of the content to read effectively (46.4%) students neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements. Therefore, the strategies that readers tend to focus are two for reading more effectively: global aspects of textual meaning and background knowledge, and two for local strategies: understanding the meaning of each word and looking up words in the dictionary.

Finally, for the last statements (21 to 28) of what are perceived to be effective strategies characteristic of the reading behaviours of the best readers subjects, the results, in order of preference, are: 91.6% agreed with understanding the overall meaning of the text, 68.3% agreed with guessing at word meanings, 66.3% agreed that integrating the information in the text with what he/she already knows was effective, 61% agreed at grasping the organization of the text, 45.8% agreed with focusing on the details of the content, 39.8% agreed with sounding out words finally 42.7% disagreed while 25.7% agreed with finding effective the use of a dictionary. In conclusion, students think that all the strategies are effective except for using a dictionary. In addition, the majority of students considered that from the global strategies: understanding the overall meaning of the text, integrating information and from the local strategy: guessing a word meaning are the most effective strategies. Also, the results of the comprehension test were 85.9% of the participants understood the text, from which 44.7% understood it completely while 10.6% half of it.

In conclusion, students perceived to use prior knowledge and experience to understand the content of the text, are able to recognize the organization of the text, to assess and evaluate the text and are capable of knowing when they understand something and when they do not. Also, they perceived themselves as resourceful readers who in the face of reading difficulties use strategies to clarify the meaning instead of giving up and stop reading. They also tend to focus on in order to read more effectively, likewise

the two global and two local strategies that they found more effective are aspects of textual meaning and background knowledge, and understanding the meaning of each word and looking up words in the dictionary.

The relationship between the readers' ideas and judgments about the effectiveness of strategies and their reading performance was also evaluated through an empirical study. The results obtained did not show a significant correlation between the students' ideas about strategies, their potential effectiveness and their reading comprehension. However, the researcher thought of several reasons why there is an absence of significant correlation between the students' metacognitive knowledge about strategies and their comprehension performance. One is that they thought the reading comprehension test may have not been difficult enough to be relevant of the level of comprehension of the students, because as the results showed, the majority of students understood the text.

Therefore, researchers think that a reading comprehension test may not be enough to measure the subjects' reading performance and the relationship between awareness of reading strategies and reading performance and that they must be studied on a wider variety of reading tasks.

2.5 Chapter conclusion

It was mentioned in this chapter the main points that are considered important to understand the present research. Themes presented in this study such as: second language acquisition, readings, difference between reading skills and strategies along with metacognitive reading, reading strategies and last but not least previous studies related to this study were explained in detail.

To continue with this research the information in this chapter was necessary and so to explore the main topic that was to what extend does students have knowledge about reading strategies. Therefore, the appropriate instruments implemented in this chapter are explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to find if there is a relationship between the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, its use and the reading comprehension in students from an English Language Teaching program at university level. Therefore, to collect the data it was necessary to carry out a questionnaire where students could evaluate what reading strategies they used. After that, the mean, mode and percentage were calculated. Then, some students were selected based on their score and other results. Finally, an interview took place.

In this chapter, I will explain the setting, the subjects, and the research methodology that will be used for this research, the instruments, the data collection procedure, and the analysis of the data, ending with the conclusions for this chapter.

3.1 Setting

The research was conducted at a language department of a public university. The students selected were from the English Teaching Major which offers a program of three years and a half to four years in a six-monthly plan. The subjects that are taught are organized into different areas: target language, pedagogic subjects, cultural studies, language studies and research subjects.

3.2 Subjects

The participants of this research were university students. The participants at the time of the study were in the last level of the English Language Target subject, with an English level between intermediate and high intermediate. For the first part of the research, a total of forty students participated, and in the second part only six students participated. The age range was from 20 to 22 years old.

3.3 Research Methodology

For this investigation the methodology used to collect and analyse data was mixed methods research and it was a case study. The reason to use this approach was because the focus of the research was based on the experiences, points of view and feelings about reading in a second language of a particular case using quantitative and qualitative data.

3.3.1 Mixed Methods Research

Nowadays, using only one method in research can lead to a lot of holes in the investigations; therefore, some researchers are starting to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Calling it a combination may sound too simple; however, the process behind this method consists of a lot of analysis and structured steps.

According to Creswell (cited in Snelson 2016) mixed methods are the research in which "the researcher gathers both quantitative (closed-ended)

and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems" (p.3). Also, Creswell together with Tashakkori (cited in Hafsa, 2019) came to the conclusion that mixed methods is a "research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry" (p.65). Both definitions make emphasis in how one method complement or add different data on the same issue and thus leading to a more complete, rich and thoughtful result of a problem.

Using mixed methods in research is a decision based on different facts. Ivankova and Greer (2015) and Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021) sustain that instead of using qualitative and quantitative methods separately, both offer their own findings for the same purpose, which makes the results more relevant and compelling. Maxwell (cited in Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021) also add that the blending of qualitative and quantitative data leads to a meaningful explanation of the research issues and "it also offers a logical ground, methodological flexibility and an in-depth understanding of smaller cases" (p.3).

Hence, these methods provide different elements to the research; quantitative approach focuses on collecting large quantities of data from an extensive group of participants, generalizing the findings of the population.

Instead, qualitative approach deepens into the problem and provides more individual and profound understanding of the problem (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021).

Finally, Tashakkori and Newman (2010, cited in Hafsa, 2019) provided seven frequently aims for using mixed methods:

- Complementarity: to blend in two diverse but related responses to a single research question using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- Completeness: for achieving a holistic view of the phenomenon studied in the research by integrating findings from quantitative and qualitative investigation.
- Development: to utilize the initial phase of the investigation to develop the research questions, data sources or sampling decisions necessary for the later phase of the study.
- Expansion: to expand the findings derived from the first phase of the investigation.
- Corroboration/confirmation: to validate the quality of conclusions derived from one type of study by checking it against mixed designs.
- Compensation: to balance the shortcomings of one method utilizing the supremacy of the other method.
- Diversity: to analyse the varied depictions of the same phenomenon.

3.3.1.1 Quantitative Research

This research method is widely used by investigators because of its easy application to participants and later, the analysis of the answers. According to Cohen (cited in Sukamolson 2007), quantitative research "is defined as social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements" (p.2), also Creswell (ibid) adds that it is "a type of research that is "explaining

phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)" (p.2).

Apuke (2017) explains that "quantitative research requires the reduction of phenomena to numerical values in order to carry out the statistical analysis... In quantitative research, Variables are very essential because it is the phenomenon that is classified and quantified" (p.43).

One of the several tools in quantitative research is survey, according to Adedoyin (2020), it "is a data collection instrument for quantitative research and there are two all-encompassing categories of survey, these are questionnaire and interview" (p.3). He also adds that "survey is suitable for gathering lots of data from large number of people because it can be applied in several forms such as mailing of questionnaires to respondents" (p.3).

Kraemer (cited in Apuke 2017) said that "in survey research method, data are obtained from people, and lastly, survey sample a part of population which is later used to generalize the whole population" (p.44). Also, Kerlinger (cited in Apuke 2017) adds that he sees "survey research as social scientific research that focuses on people, the vital facts about people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour" (p.44).

3.3.1.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a method widely used among researchers in the social and human sciences; this derives from the researcher's need to know how a problem is perceived by the participants. It means the researcher tries to find the personal view or perspective about the participants' common problem which translates into human interaction or emotional response. Among the research problems that are studied it can be topics that differ from social, political, education, culture and so on. (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). The results of the investigation are mainly "information that cannot be easily measured, such as people's opinions and feelings, rather than on information that can be shown in numbers". It means that the researcher will not take into account for example, how many people feel or view a certain problem, but more about what they feel, why and the effects of that problem in their lives, analysing their responses and looking for concepts or ideas in common between the participants. Finally, the researcher writes a scientific report in which he narrates "the voices of participants, a reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and a study that adds to the literature or provides a call for action" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

Creswell (2007) points out that there are:

...nine characteristics present in a qualitative research such as: natural setting (the field of the participants), research as key instrument (the researcher is

the one who collects all different types of data), multiple source of data (interviews, audios, observations etc.), inductive data analysis (the data is organised in patterns or categories), participants' meanings (the thoughts of the participants about the problem), emergent design (the process of the research may change), theoretical lens (the use of concepts such as culture, gender, class etc.), interpretative inquiry (researcher, participants and readers make a personal interpretation of the study) and holistic account (identifying the complex interactions of factors of the problem)" (p. 37-39).

"The process of qualitative research involves a lot of time, the analysis of several types of data and the use of a qualitative approach" (p.51). Creswell (2007) points out five different types of approaches. He explains that he chose these because it "...resulted from following personal interests, selecting different foci, and electing to choose representative discipline orientations" (p.9). The approaches he proposes are narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study.

3.3.2 Case Study

Case study has been a method widely used in many research fields such as education, history, public administration, psychology and others (Rebolj, 2013). Diverse authors (Harrison et al. 2017; Mesec, 1998; Rebolj 2013; Yin, 2012) have their own interpretation of what a case study is and the elements that compose it and even though their ideas sound different they share some similarities. Mesec (1998 in Rebolj 2013) mentions that case study is "a description and analysis of an individual matter or cases" (p.31). Yin (2012)

adds that the study can derive an up-close, close or in-depth understanding of such cases. Karlsson (2016) also mentions that the number of cases may vary and that it “should investigate a real-life situation...which should be spatially and temporally bounded and thereby context-dependent” (p.1); this means that the research has to take place in a certain time and space. In addition, she mentions that “the whole point of a case study is to investigate the links between the case and its context and thereby get a sense of what is common about the case and what is specific about it” (p.6). Similar to Karlsson, Mesec (1998) mentions that the purpose of a case study is “to identify variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation”.

Another important point that Rebolj (2013) mentions is that “a case study is important for developing different views of reality, including the awareness that human behaviour cannot be understood merely as an act that is driven by a rule or a theory” (p.38), meaning that the subjective views or experiences and the meaning that each individual gives to the case is unique and irreversible because as mentioned before it is delimited by time and space. She makes an emphasis stating that “...the idea that people have of reality is important for researchers, not the reality itself.” (Vogrinc 2008 in Rebolj 2013 p. 30). Additionally, she points out that “case studies can contribute to the professional development of a researcher, as case studies can provide concrete, context-dependent experience that increases their research skills” (p.38). Likewise, Yin (2012) states something similar “the

closeness aims to produce an invaluable and deep understanding ...hopefully resulting in new learning about real-world behaviour and its meaning” (p.4). Both authors sustain that besides the results of the investigation, the investigator would always obtain personal knowledge about himself as a researcher or about the research field. Finally, as noticed by Eysenck (in Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 224) “sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases –not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something.”

Authors argue that case study is a method that explores a single or several “small” cases which can present a lot of variables, this being the result of using a qualitative approach as its main procedure to collect the data for the research. Nevertheless, it can contain a mix of both methods quantitative and qualitative that could help to collect more information. Harrison et al (2017) claim that the use of diverse methods in case study are “encouraged and found to be informative” because “together they provide a more synergistic and comprehensive view of the issue being studied” (p.12).

3.4 Instruments

The instruments that were used in order to know students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies were a questionnaire and stimulated recall which will be described below.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are useful instruments employed in research, they collect big quantities of information in numerical data which makes easier the analysis of the responses.

A simply definition of it could be "A questionnaire is a written instrument used to obtain information from study subjects" (WHO, 2008, p. 107). Malhotra (2006) explains that a questionnaire is "a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents. The overriding objective is translating the researcher's information needs into a set of specific questions that respondents are willing and able to answer" (p. 176).

In addition, Brown (2001, cited in Young 2016) states that "Questionnaires are defined as any text-based instrument that give survey participants a series of questions to answer or statements to respond to either by indicating a response – by marking a page, writing a number or checking a box on paper or online, for example" (p.4). To complement it, Fife-Schaw (2006, cited in Young 2016) expressed that "...questionnaires remain the single most common means of conducting surveys and are indeed probably one of, if not the, most commonly-used research tools in the social sciences" (p.4).

Questionnaires can be written in three formats. Structured questions make use of close-end or closed questions which allow a limited number of answers (WHO, 2008). They are "quick to complete and straightforward to

code... do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate respondents are" (Cohen, 2007, p.321). The questions specify the set of responses as well as their format like multiple-choices or a scale. Scale refers to numerical data, according to Cohen (2007 p. 322), it can vary the presentation such as:

Nominal data indicate categories; ordinal data indicate order ('high' to 'low', 'first' to 'last', 'smallest' to 'largest', 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree', 'not at all' to 'a very great deal'); interval data indicate equal interval between each data point; ratio data indicate continuous values and a true zero (e.g. marks in a test, number of attendances per year).

In multiple-choice questions, the responses are provided by the researcher. In them, the statements are written with the intention to capture the likely range of answers and the respondents can choose one or more answers.

Unstructured questions are usually known as open-ended questions and "are useful if the possible answers are unknown or the questionnaire is exploratory or if there are so many possible categories of response that a closed question would contain an extremely long list of options" (Bailey, 1994, in Cohen, p.321). They permit that the participant answer in an honest, free and more personal way, they express their attitudes, motivations, beliefs or opinions without the bias associated with restricting

responses to predefined alternatives (Malhotra, 2006, p. 182) than with close-end questions.

Finally, semi-structured questions integrate both formats, structured and unstructured questions in their questionnaire.

In this research, a semi-structured questionnaire was used and it was divided in three sections: the first one contained seven yes/no questions; the second, twelve multiple ordinal (from 0 to 3) questions and fourteen ordinal (from never to always) questions; finally, the third section contained five open questions.

The questions were designed based on two research papers: Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002 and Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2009; and after a pilot stage they were redesigned and presented to the respondents (See Appendix A).

3.4.2 Stimulated Recall

Stimulated recall is a research method in which the interviewed tries to remember the thought process he had when he did certain actions, interviews are usually accompanied by support materials that stimulate the memories of the interviewed.

According to Pitkänen, “stimulated recall refers to post-participation interviews where the participant is supported in their recall of their thoughts during the event by being shown recorded media (e.g., audio, video, and still images) of their participation” (p.117). Ryan and Gass (2012) point out that

“Stimulated Recall is a type of introspective research methodology... in that it involves the verbalisation of cognition retrospectively rather than concurrently. It is a method used to elicit qualitative data relating to the thought processes” (p.1).

Plaut (2006), Seung and Schallert (2004) and Slough (2001, cited in Fox-Turnbull 2011) state that not only visual material can be present in the interview but also "...other data gathering strategies such as: observation, interviews, recorded conversations, and participants' work sample" (p.206). Gass & Mackey (2016) add that the important part to use a stimulus is "...to activate or refresh recollection of cognitive processes so that they can be accurately recalled and verbalized. The stimulus results from a task that the participant was involved in and is essentially a record of that event" (p.44). It is also important to note that the interview can be done in the L1 of the participant and that the interviewer "help participants provide recall comments without challenging their preconceived notions of appropriateness and without leading them" (Gass & Mackey 2016 p.59).

It was necessary to know the thought process of some participants and add more information to this research. For that reason, stimulated recall was used as another source of data elicitation. The stimulus used for the interview was an academic article or the chapter of an academic book that the participant had previously read; it was highlighted that the language in which it was read was English. The interview took place in the

native language of the participants (Spanish). In this interview students were asked about a specific text they had read and some questions were asked: what they needed to read it for, if they found problems while reading it and what they did to overcome them (See Appendix B).

3.5 Data Collection

The procedure for collecting the data was done as follows. First, a questionnaire was applied to three groups of bachelor's degree students. At that time, the students were taking the target language IV course, which was an important parameter for my data collection. The questionnaire was composed by three sections. The first one was a multiple-choice section, the second was a yes/no section and the third was an open section.

Second, six students were selected based on the open responses. They agreed to participate in an interview. Both the questionnaires and the interviews were carried out online due to the pandemic COVID-19.

Third, the information from the instruments was collected, analysed and reported in Chapter IV.

3.6 Data Analysis

After collecting all the data, the information from the questionnaires and from the interviews was analysed. First, the data of the questionnaires was analysed according to each section of the questionnaire. The responses from students about what reading strategies they used before reading a text were

written in a table using Microsoft Excel. After selecting the ones with the highest scores, a bar chart was done representing these strategies. The same was done with the reading strategies students use while and the strategies used after reading a text. Then, the responses from the interviewed students were analysed and compared with the ones from the questionnaires. Also, some comments made by students were selected.

After that the comments made from both the questionnaire and the interviews for the reading strategies awareness and their use were selected and analysed. Likewise, in the interviews, students mentioned other strategies that were not presented in the questionnaire. Therefore, an analysis was conducted finding similar responses in the interviews and then the strategies were presented in Chapter IV.

Similarly, students mentioned some of their reading habits in the interviews. This information was found to be important, thus their responses were analysed and the habits were also written in the results' chapter.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, it was mentioned the setting, the subjects, the methodology that was used for this research, the instruments used for collection the data, how the information from students was obtained and how it was analysed. In the next chapter, the results of the instruments are presented.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter first, the aims and research questions of the research, the general information of students reading habits are provided. Secondly, the strategies used before and while reading an academic text, some strategies that students used after reading are explained as well as the reading strategies awareness and how students use them. Finally, other reading strategies students use and the conclusion of the chapter are demonstrated.

4.1 Aims and Research Questions

The aims of this research are the following:

- To investigate the strategies students use before and while reading an academic text.
- To analyse how students, use the before and while reading strategies.
- To explore students' awareness of reading strategies.
- To analyse how students use those reading strategies.

The research questions that lead this study are:

1. What reading strategies do ELT students employ or implement before and while they read a text? How do they use them?

2. Are students aware of the reading strategies? If so, how?

4.2 General Information of Students' Reading Habits

After the questionnaire was administered, some students were chosen to be interviewed. Six of them decided to participate therefore in this section we are going to refer to them as participant 1, participant 2 etc. with their proper abbreviations such as P1, P2 etc.

While interviewing the participants, they were asked if they read in their L1 or L2 any type of material that was not necessary for their college courses. Participants gave different responses. First, participant 1 stated that she read some information on the internet:

A mí la verdad no me gusta leer porque pierdo la concentración... pero si leía, por ejemplo, me dejaban de tarea buscar el presente perfecto y lo buscaba en inglés o si me dejaban tarea de algo, no sé, algo extra, sí lo hacía y también buscaba información acerca de temas de mi agrado en Google. A veces tecleaba otros temas como pérdida del cabello ¿no? Y ponía hair loss y así y me ponía a leer eso (P1).

To tell you the truth, I don't like reading because I cannot concentrate... but I used to read, for example, for homework had to get some information about the present perfect and I did it in English or if I had some homework about other topics, I did it and I also searched information about topics of my interest in Google. Sometimes I wrote other topics such as hair loss no? and I wrote hair loss and I read about it.

Other participants stated that they read in English but the material was usually the books they used for work. Also, they stated that what they read in English was mostly texts on the internet:

Como estaba trabajando... me daban los libros del maestro y para apoyo y eran en inglés y los leía. Pero, yo creo que sí, información en inglés si leo, pero en el celular igual de algunas páginas o algo que pueda entender también lo leo en inglés, pero lo que estaba enfocada pues eran los libros que tenía para poder trabajar. En Facebook, igual me encuentro diferentes artículos no sé, de algo que me guste, de los gatos (ríe) o no sé de diferentes cosas pero que a mí me llaman la atención, artículos relacionados con mis gustos (P2).

As I was working, I was given the teacher's book and others for support. They were in English and I read them. But, I think yes, I read information in English but on the cell phone of some websites or something that I could understand. I also read them in English, but I was mainly focused on the books I had for working. On Facebook I also found different articles, I don't know of something I like, of cats (laughs) I don't know of different topics that are interesting to me.

Por ejemplo, ya sea en Instagram o en Twitter que es donde normalmente frecuento estos textos o incluso en mi trabajo. Soy maestra de un preescolar en el área de inglés entonces, sí son lecturas en inglés o el planear en inglés y obviamente todo el material que manejo es en inglés y leo a lo mejor no mucho texto complicado, pero sí llevo a leer texto en inglés (P3).

For example, either on Instagram or Twitter is where I normally find those texts or even in my work. I'm a teacher in a preschool in the area of English, so they are texts in English or I plan my class in English. Obviously, all the material I manage is in English and yes, I read maybe not too much complicated text, but yes, I read in English.

One of the participants stated that she reads not only books in her target language but also, different types of content on the internet.

Pues sí, estaba leyendo un libro en inglés. Por lo regular leo libros o a veces en redes sociales; por ejemplo, leo textos en inglés. Por lo regular estoy en páginas de Facebook que son en inglés, tienen textos o frases de todo tipo. Entonces ahí es donde leo estos textos y también me voy familiarizando un poco más con palabras desconocidas (P4).

I was reading a book in English. Sometimes they are books or social networks; for example, I read texts in English. Usually I read Facebook pages that are in English, where they have texts or phrases of any kind. There is where I read those texts and also, I get a little bit more familiar with unknown words etcetera.

Finally, there were other participants that explained that they do not like to read at all. Instead they practice their English skills with videos, music or movies; it is stated with participant 5 that she read the movie subtitles.

Prefiero poner en práctica mi listening y entonces pongo una película en inglés y ya. Solo voy tratando de entenderlo y me apoyo con los subtítulos y también escucho canciones. Trato de entender todo lo que dicen. Pero leer, no, textos o libros no (P5).

I prefer to put my listening skill on practice, then I play a movie in English and I try to understand it and I use the subtitles and I also listen to songs. I try to understand to everything they say. But reading, no, texts or books no.

La verdad no me gusta leer o sea lo hago por necesidad, dentro de la carrera lo hago por necesidad, por las materias. Me gusta mucho escuchar música entonces mi acercamiento con el

idioma es a través de canciones y a veces con películas o con series, pero es más con canciones, con música (P6).

The truth is I don't like to read I mean I do it for necessity, in the university; I do it for the courses. I like to listen to music a lot, then my approach to practice the language is through songs and sometimes movies or series, but it's more with songs, with music.

In the case of participant 6 she said she likes to listen to music and even though it is not stated, it can be inferred she reads the lyrics before. It seems that these participants read subtitles; however, they do not consider it as a reading activity.

4.3 Strategies Used Before and While Reading an Academic Text

In this section the results from the first part of the questionnaire are showed to answer the first research question. The results are supported by the answers provided in the interviews. The results obtained are presented below.

4.3.1 Strategies Used Before Reading an Academic Text

This section shows the answers students choose in the questionnaire and that respond to the first research question. The answers are from the strategies used before reading a text.

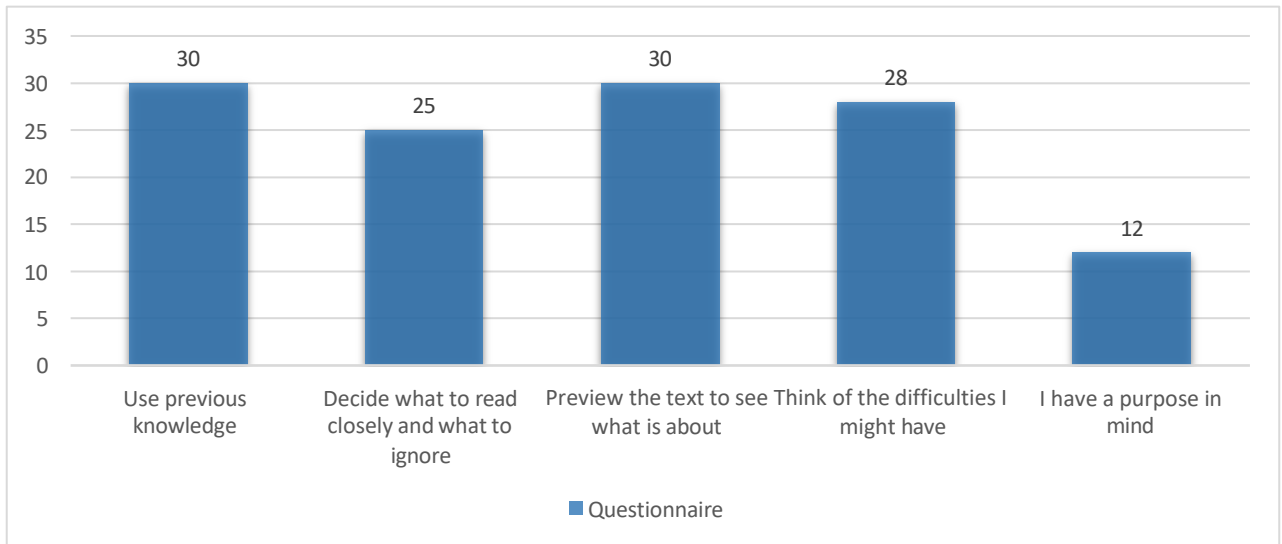


Fig. 4.1 Reading Strategies that Students Use Before Reading an Academic Text (Questionnaire)

As figure 4.1 shows 30 (n=40) students *use the previous knowledge they have before reading a text* and 30 *preview the text to see what is going to be about*. 28 students *think of the difficulty they may have before reading an academic text*, 25 *decide what to read closely and what to ignore* and 12 *have a purpose in mind* for the academic text.

On the contrary, the results from the interviews show an almost completely different outcome.

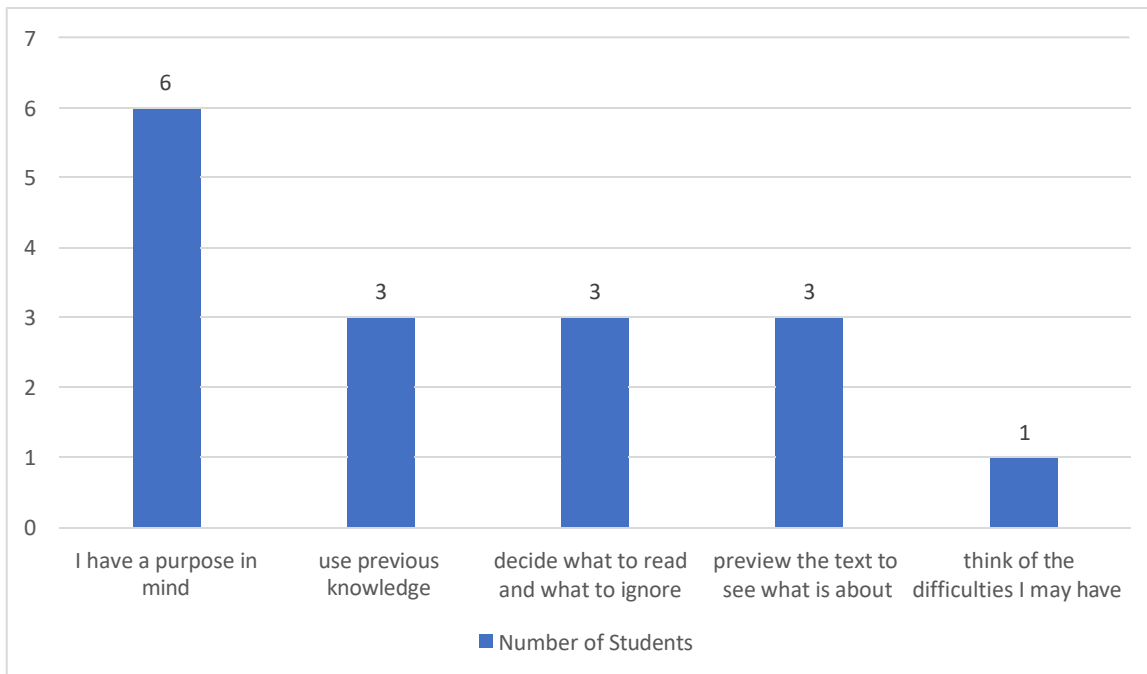


Fig. 4.2 Reading Strategies Students Use Before Reading an Academic Text (Interview)

About the strategy most used in the interviews, *I have a purpose in mind*, P5 explained that the purpose she had when reading was to summarize each paragraph in a sentence. She mentioned the following:

Fue un texto que nos dieron para que lo leyéramos, comprendiéramos de que hablaba y después teníamos que poner comentarios de lo que entendíamos o pensábamos de cada párrafo... en el primer párrafo tengo una nota que puse con lápiz y así en cada párrafo tengo notitas...esa hoja la checaba el profesor pero era algo no formal porque él quería ver si en realidad habíamos hecho apuntes y anotaciones...y en clase nos preguntaba al azar que habíamos entendido de la primera parte de la segunda etc., y algunos contestaban y otros algunos no. (P5)

We used this text to read it, to understand it and later we had to write comments about what we understood or thought about each paragraph...I wrote notes for each paragraph...that paper was checked by the teacher because he wanted to see if we wrote the notes...he asked us at random in class what we understood from the first part, the second part etc some answered and others not.

Similarly, another student mentioned that summarizing the text was the purpose when reading. P1 mentioned that:

Mi maestra nos hacía leer el capítulo de tarea y teníamos que hacer un resumen y después del resumen en clase la profesora ya explicaba los conceptos. (P1)

The teacher made us read the chapter as homework and we had to make a summary, in the next class the teacher explained the concepts.

Finally, another participant stated that she also did a summary, in addition she answered some questions about the topic. P3 said:

El maestro nos dejó unas preguntas y un resumen, pero ya no recuerdo realmente que preguntas, por ejemplo, como lidiaríamos con un salón de adolescentes o jóvenes más que adultos.

The teacher gave us some questions to answer and told us to do a summary, however, I don't remember the type of questions he gave us. I think it was about how we would discipline a classroom of teenagers or younger students rather than adults.

For the strategy "Use previous knowledge", one of the participants mentioned how she used that strategy:

Debido a que mi nivel de inglés era muy bajo terminé utilizando un traductor ...pero fue hasta el final. Primero traté de entenderlo sola, por ejemplo, en el texto tengo muchas palabras subrayadas... eso es porque trate de entenderlo primero con el conocimiento que tenía. P1

Since my English level was low I used a translator... however that was at the end of my reading, because I tried to understand it by myself, for example I underlined a lot of words, and that was because I tried to first understand it with the knowledge I had.

P5 also mentioned how she applied this strategy when reading the text:

Al leer el texto noté que había cosas básicas que debíamos de saber de la traducción, había cosas que... por intuición dices "debo de saber tal y tal cosa", por ejemplo, al leer el título de lo que vas a tener que estudiar para algo básico en traducción, pensé que esta estrategia se llamaba de cierta manera.

While reading the text, I noticed that there were some things I should already know about translation; there were times when I thought "I should know about this and that", for example, when reading the title about translation I thought that this strategy is called in this way.

Likewise, another participant responded that she noted she remembered previous information related to the text:

No leí todo, solo leí la información que necesitaba ya que tenía conocimientos previos de ciertos aspectos de control de clase, materiales y cosas así, por lo que solo me enfoque en buscar las respuestas del cuestionario y complementar un poco con lo que había en el texto. P3

I didn't read everything, I only read the information I needed because I had previous knowledge about classroom management strategies, materials and so on; that is why, I tried to focus on the answers of the questionnaire and add a little bit of information of the text.

For the strategy "Decide what to read and what to ignore", three participants mentioned that they decided not to read all the text the first time. Participant 2 added: "I first read the subtitles and then I look into the part where it says summary". P3 also commented: "I only read the first chapter completely and then I read a summary of the next chapter because I did not read it completely".

Additionally, participant 4 explained: "I read what I thought was the most interesting in this chapter, I remember there where a lot of them".

About the strategy "Preview the text to see what it is about" P2 answered the following: "The first thing I did when I got the text was to read the title and then I skimmed the text very quickly and read the subtitles because I didn't read all at once".

Then another participant commented how she looked very quickly at the text and noticed the main theme:

Antes de leer el texto ya sabía de qué iba a tratar el tema porque el título lo dice y aparte por los subtemas que tiene, los leí rápido y eso es lo que me hizo darme la idea de qué era lo que iba a tratar. P4

Before reading the text, I knew what it was going to be about because I read the title and the subtopics it has. I read them quickly and that was what made me realize what the theme was going to be about.

P6 mentioned that she looked at the text quickly to catch what it was going to be about: “the first time I read the text I just look at it very quickly while underlining the words in bold”.

Finally, for the strategy “Think of the difficulties I may have”, one participant answered how she thought the text could be difficult for her:

Yo consideraba en ese entonces que no tenía un muy buen nivel de inglés a pesar de que ya estábamos en una etapa avanzada de la carrera...entonces sentía que no tenía mucho vocabulario y pues sí pensé que me iban a costar algunas cosas, pero realmente cuando lo leí todo, pues, no se me hizo tan difícil. O sea creo que...por lo que me estoy acordando, solo tengo como una palabra que no entendía al momento y ya cuando la investigue en el diccionario la recordé...pero creo que fue eso más que nada, fue la duda de no saber si le iba a entender a todas las palabras o no. P5

I thought at that time I didn't have a good level of English even though I was in the last stage of the degree. I thought I didn't know too much vocabulary and thought I could not understand some things, however when I read everything it was not so difficult, for what I am remembering I think I only didn't understand one word and when I investigated it in the dictionary I remembered it. I think I only had the doubt of not knowing if I was going to understand all the words of the text.

4.3.2 Strategies Used while Reading an Academic Text

Students were also asked in a questionnaire about the strategies they used while they are reading a text, the following data is the students' response:

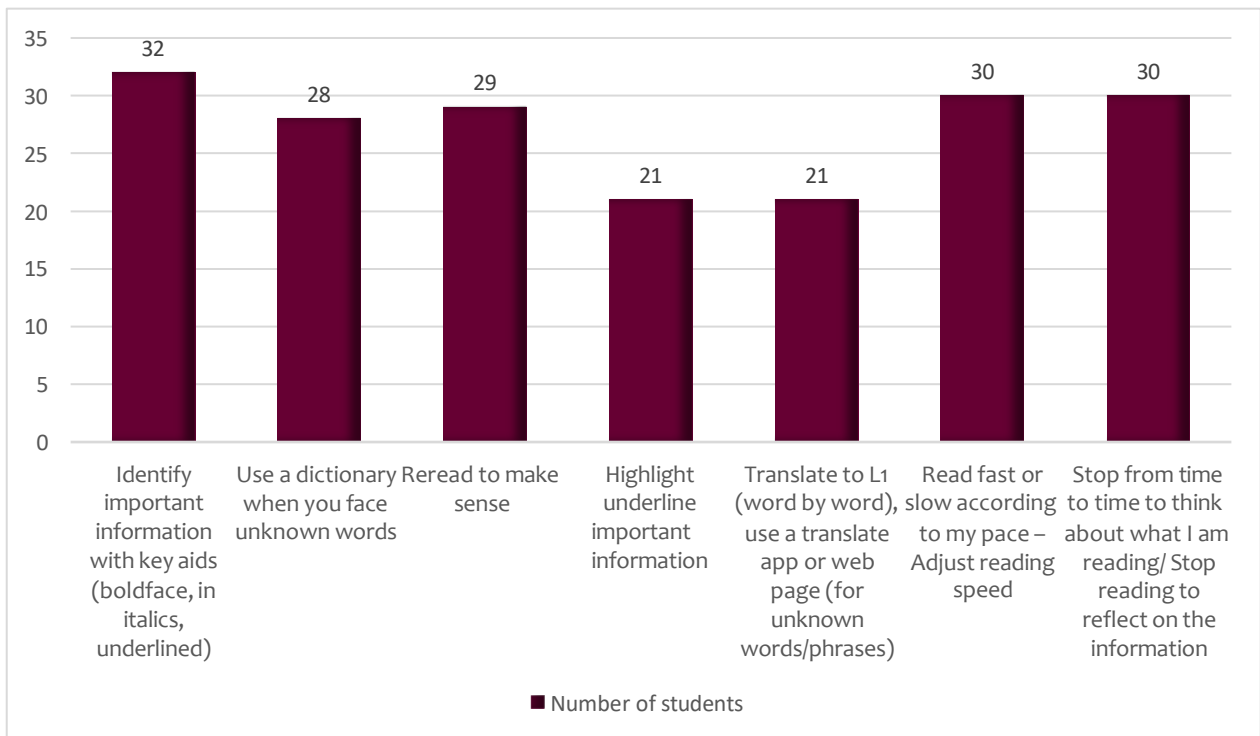


Fig. 4.3 Reading Strategies Students Used While Reading an Academic Text

Figure 4.3 shows the strategies used by students while they were reading an academic text. The graphic shows seven of the highest answered questions on the questionnaire: *Identify important information with key aids (boldface, in italics, underlined)* 32 (n=40). *Read fast or slow according to my pace - Adjust reading speed* and *Stop from time to time to think about what I am reading/ Stop reading to reflect on the information* 30 (n=40). *Reread to make sense* 29 (n=40) and *Use a dictionary when face unknown words* (28 n=49). Finally *Highlight underline important information* and *Translate to L1 (word by word), use a translate app or web page (for unknown words/phrases)* are two strategies used by 21 students.

Interviewed students were also asked about the strategies they used while reading an academic text. Students mentioned five of the seven strategies that students in the questionnaire mentioned:

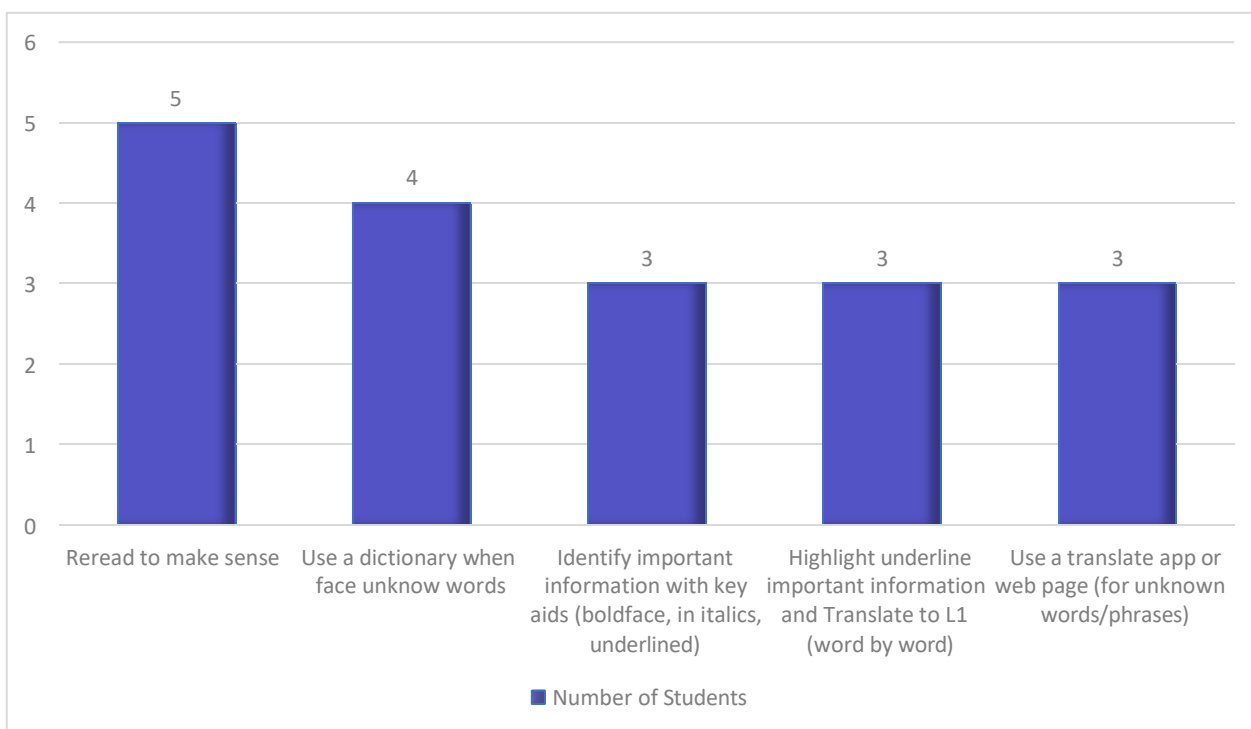


Fig. 4.4 Strategies Used While Reading a Text Mentioned by Interviewed Students

It can be seen that the most mentioned strategy was *Reread to make sense*.

P5 mentioned the following:

Porque tenía que realmente comprender el texto y analizarlo...lo leí mínimo dos veces, porque siempre con todos los textos si al principio no le entiendo o no creo haberle entendido bien lo vuelvo a leer, y en la segunda me concentro y capto todas las ideas. (P5)

Because I had to understand the text and analyse it... I read it at least twice. With all the texts, if I don't understand them at the beginning or if I think I didn't understand them very well, I read again and the second time I can concentrate and grab the main ideas.

P6 made another comment about this strategy, she mentioned the following:

Había vocabulario que no entendía, que era nuevo para mí porque era basado en el assesment o en la evaluación y había palabras que no conocía y que tuve que releer bastantes veces.

It had vocabulary I didn't understand because it was new for me or it was about assessment and there were words I didn't know and that is why I had to reread it several times.

The second most mentioned strategy was *Using a dictionary when facing unknown words* and for *Use a translate app or web page*, P2 explained the following:

El texto estaba en inglés y yo aun no tenía un nivel muy avanzado, por eso me costó entender algunas palabras ya que desconocía su significado. Tenía que buscar el significado de la palabra para que pudiera entender bien o cuál era la idea principal... usaba un diccionario o una aplicación en el celular y otra aplicación que era el traductor para que me diera la traducción de esa palabra.

Because the text was in English and I didn't have an advanced level it took me a lot to understand some unknown words. I had to search the meaning of the words so I could understand what was the text was about or the main idea...I used a hard copy dictionary, a dictionary app and, another translator app so I could get the translation of that word.

For the strategy *Identify important information with key aids* some students mentioned the following:

Las oraciones que subrayé eran los conceptos importantes de cada párrafo, por ejemplo, hay unos que ... son letras en negritas; esos son los conceptos importantes y a veces subrayaba lo que significaba eso, relacionado a esas letras en negritas. (P1)

The sentences I underlined were the important concepts from each paragraph, for example there were some words that were boldface. Those were the important concepts, sometimes I underlined those sentences, the ones related to the boldface.

Vi solamente los subtítulos que traía y me fui directamente a donde dice summary... y fue ahí donde lo leí más detenidamente para poder entender de que trataba y no leer todo el texto de una vez sino con más tranquilidad (P2)

I read the subtitles and then I read where it says summary, it was there where I read more carefully and tried to understand what it was about so I could read it all calmly.

Finally, for the strategy "Highlight/ underline important information", P6 mentioned:

Tenía que hacer un resumen y sacar las citas principales para exponerlo... le di una hojeada, e iba subrayando las palabras negritas que entendía que era lo principal... fue lo más practico que hice.

I had to do a summary and find the important ideas...I skimmed the text and I was underlining the boldface words which I understood were the main ideas, that was the most practical activity I did.

It should be noted that *Read fast or slow according to my pace – Adjust reading speed* and *Stop from time to time to think about what I am reading/ Stop reading to reflect on the information* were two of the most used strategies by students in the questionnaire. In the interview only 2 students for each strategy mentioned to have used them while reading a text.

4.3.3 Strategies Used after Reading an Academic Text

In the following graph can be seen that, *integrate comments from other people* was selected by 25 students (n=40) on the questionnaire and *Take notes* by 26 students.

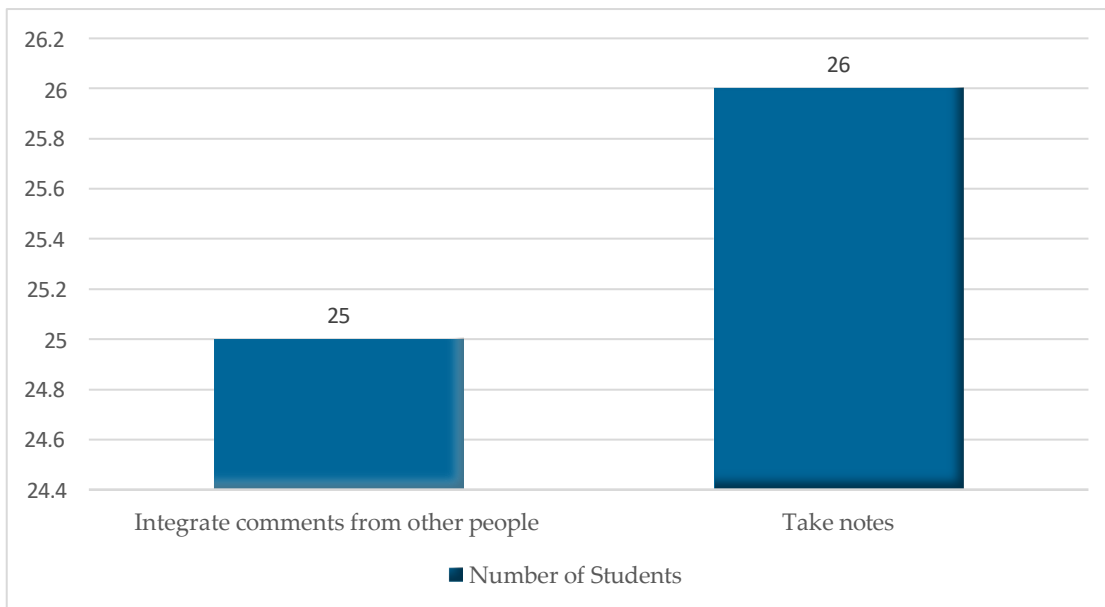


Fig. 4.5 Reading Strategies that Students Used After Reading an Academic Text

During the interview, these strategies were mentioned by 4 and 2 students respectively. However, they stated that they used them after reading the text.

For the strategy “Integrate comments from other people”, participant 4 said: “...for the part I didn’t understand I asked my teacher about it, then, she explained that part to me and so I understood it better.”

Likewise, participant 5 shared: “...it was easy to understand because they were basic translation topics, also in class we talked about how to put it into practice in everyday life and with that I think I understood it better in the end.”

Participant 1 explained not only how she integrated comments from her teacher but also how she took different notes about the topic:

La maestra nos hacía leer el capítulo de tarea y teníamos que hacer un resumen. En clase la profesora explicaba los conceptos, entonces lo que hacía en unas hojitas amarillas era escribir el concepto junto con la definición explicada por la maestra como para tener una idea más clara.

The teacher made us read the chapter as homework, then we wrote a summary. In class the teacher explained the concepts and then I wrote some in small yellow papers, the concept together with the definition that the teacher explained so I could have a clearer idea.

Just as P1, P2 also said that not only she integrated comments but also took notes from the topic she read:

...algunas palabras y algunas ideas no me quedaban claras entonces como lo leímos en clase hubo un debate por así decirlo, una plática sobre lo que leímos. Lo que los demás compañeros entendían o lo que ellos lograban entender también lo expresaban en sus propias palabras y yo trataba de escuchar lo que ellos decían lo que para ellos era investigar y también tomaba nota de lo que ellos decían, pero de

lo que para mí era importante, lo que podía complementar con lo que ya había escrito o entendido.

...some words and ideas were not all that clear for me, then in class we had a debate, a talk about what we read. Then my classmates expressed what they understood in their own words and I tried to listen to what they said, to what they understood *investigation* was and also, I took notes of their ideas, about what I thought was the most important and with what I complemented what I wrote or understood.

In addition, 4 (n=6) students mentioned other strategy they used after reading: *Search more information about the theme (in L1 or L2)*. This strategy was not asked in the questionnaire.

Participant 1 explained in which case she searched more information:

Había veces que la profesora antes de realizar un examen nos hacía un repaso general del capítulo, por ejemplo, del capítulo 7 y nos ponía a explicar un concepto por ejemplo que era *two case study*. Entonces ahí era cuando yo buscaba en internet así lo ponía *two case study examples* y entonces me aparecían varios ejemplos de varias fuentes y los leía. Trataba de leerlos en inglés como para familiarizarme con el vocabulario y ya con eso me queda más clara la idea, en esos casos era cuando buscaba en otros lugares la información.

Sometimes before an exam, the teacher gave us a review about the chapter, and then we had to explain the concepts; for example, about what is “two case study.” It was then when I searched on the internet and I wrote it like that “two case study examples”. There were a lot of different sources and I tried to read them all especially in English so I could get acquainted with the vocabulary and I could get a clearer idea. It was in those cases when I searched more information in different sources.

P2 also shared her experience when she looked for more information in her target language and in her mother tongue:

Para que tuviera una idea más amplia de lo que estaba leyendo busqué más información sobre lo que estaba tratando de entender, pero con vocabulario que pudiera comprender y lo busqué usando internet. Lo investigué tanto en inglés como en español, porque en inglés me daba las definiciones de lo que estaba leyendo y también lo leía en inglés para practicar. Lo buscaba en español para entenderle mucho mejor a lo que estaba leyendo.

I looked for more information because I wanted to have more information about what I was reading and trying to understand. I tried to find information with vocabulary I could understand on the internet. I sought it both English and Spanish because in English I read the definitions and practiced my English and in Spanish I understood better what I was reading.

P4 said how she selected the ideas she wanted later:

Siempre subrayo o en dado caso escribo las oraciones en alguna hoja o bueno en libreta para tener la idea después de investigarlo. Investigo bien hasta que puedo comprender exactamente el contexto y también busco un poco más o indago en otras partes para comprender más.

I always underline or write in a paper the ideas I want for later. I seek the information until I can understand the context and try to use other resources so I can understand it better.

P6 explained more about why she looks for more information and in what language she reads that material:

Había conceptos nuevos para mí que no conocía, entonces se me complicó. Por ejemplo, había un término que en inglés es el *wash back* y lo leí una vez y no entendí y lo tuve que buscar en español porque no entendía a qué se refería, fue eso, conceptos que ni siquiera con la lectura capté.

Por lo regular busco resúmenes en español, para entenderle más rápido porque luego encuentro resúmenes que tienen otro tipo de vocabulario que no entiendo y tengo que buscar aparte de ese resumen palabras que a veces no entendía en ese momento. Entonces es más fácil buscarlo en español y decir trata de esto y ya.

I read new and unknown concepts for me so that is why I thought it was complicated. For example, I read a concept called wash back and I didn't understand it, that is why I had to search it in Spanish. These are the type of concepts I searched more because I didn't understand them in the text.

Usually I search summaries in Spanish so I can understand them better because the ones in English have unknown vocabulary for me and I also have to search those words that is why it is easier for me to read it in Spanish.

4.4 Reading Strategies Awareness and their Use

In this section, students were asked their opinion about reading strategies awareness and their use. Students answered with their own words what they thought about this question.

Some participants shared their point of view of how knowing the reading strategies have advantages in the reading. One advantage for them

was to understand the reading better and easier. Some of the most interesting comments are shown in the following table:

P11	I think that if you know them, the readings will be a little easier, you will have strategies and ways to locate the central idea.
P23	From my perspective, it helps to a student to prepare his mind to what is going to be working and how.
P24	It gives us a great help to understand what we read even though it is not of our interest or we consider it boring
P30	When you already know how use them and which they are, it makes your work faster and easy. Knowing about them helps to you to comprehended more the text, looking for what you need without the need to read everything in case you need the information faster, it can apply in exams or activities.
P37	If you know the strategies you can get the most useful parts of a reading, according to what you're looking for.
P38	They help us to look for and identify specific information, get key words to comprehend the texts, and also to improve and increase our reading skills.
P9	I think it helps us understand what we read more easily
P40	Maybe cause these strategies will help me to understand better a reading and not to lose important information

Other participants shared that reading strategies help them to have a better organization, spend less time and enjoy the readings:

P3: It helps me to structure all the ideas I get from reading texts and to give them organization and clarity.

P18: I noticed that they helped me to understand and comprehend the text in less time

P35: I think it makes my reading comprehension more enjoyable and less frustrating. For example, if I find it difficult to understand a reading, I use the strategies without having to spend a long time on it.

Two of the participants explained what they thought about reading, reading strategies and metacognition:

P2: to really understand what is important and helpful for us in the text so we don't force ourselves. I've heard that reading is not only "reading", is more like understanding the meaning of the text without focusing on every single word so is not tedious.

P33: It's very important to be conscious about our metacognition and the correct use of reading strategies to comprehend a reading. In my case, I always apply scanning and skimming strategies and it depends on the purpose, the motivation and other factors to read a text.

Finally, one participant shared how she utilised the strategies and also explained the advantages and disadvantages:

P28: In my opinion, these strategies help you to find information for a certain topic, without wasting your time reading the whole book or article. In my case it helps just to find information that I need, but sometimes do not help me to pay attention.

Students who were interviewed shared their experience when facing difficulties with the text, also how they overcome those problems to finally get a better understanding of the text and fulfil their reading goal. Some of them underlined and paid more attention to words in bold:

Subrayaba las oraciones que yo pensaba eran los conceptos importantes de cada párrafo, por ejemplo, hay unos que están letras en negritas, esos son los conceptos importantes y subrayaba eso, lo que estaba en letras en negritas.

I underlined the sentences I thought were important from each paragraph, for example the ones in bold, were the important concepts I underlined. P1

Le di una hojeada, e iba subrayando las palabras negritas que pensé que era lo principal.

I scan the text and underlined the words in bold because I thought they were the main ideas. P6

Some students mentioned that they used dictionaries and translator apps to understand unknown words:

También para entender el texto lo escribí en el traductor, pero me tomaba como tres horas, e iba comparándolo con lo que entendí a ver si sí era lo que decía

Also, to understand the text I wrote it on the translator app, it took me a lot of time and I compared it with what I understood so I could see if it was that. P1

El texto estaba en inglés y yo aun no tenía un nivel muy avanzado, por eso me costó entender algunas palabras ya que desconocía su significado. Tenía que buscar el significado de la palabra para que pudiera entender bien o cuál era la idea principal... usaba un diccionario o una aplicación en el celular y otra aplicación que era el traductor para que me diera la traducción de esa palabra.

Because the text was in English and I didn't have an advanced level it took me a lot to understand some unknown words. I had to search the meaning of the words so I could understand what was the text was about or the main idea...I used a hard copy dictionary, a dictionary app and, another translator app so I could get the translation of that word. P2

También cuando no entendía una palabra la buscaba en el diccionario, no usaba eso de entenderla con contexto.

Also, when I didn't understand a word I preferred to search it on the dictionary, I didn't understand it by context. P2

Other participants used the information that classmates or the teacher said to complement their ideas:

...algunas palabras y algunas ideas no me quedaban claras entonces como lo leímos en clase hubo un debate por así decirlo, una plática sobre lo que leímos. Lo que los demás compañeros entendían o lo que ellos lograban entender también lo expresaban en sus propias palabras y yo trataba de escuchar lo que ellos decían lo

que para ellos era investigar y también tomaba nota de lo que ellos decían, pero de lo que para mí era importante, lo que podía complementar con lo que ya había escrito o entendido.

...some words and ideas were not all that clear for me, then in class we had a debate, a talk about what we read. Then my classmates expressed what they understood in their own words and I tried to listen to what they said, to what they understood investigation was and also, I took notes of their ideas, about what I thought was the most important and with what I complemented what I wrote or understood. P2

Some students used images or other types of visual aides to clarify the information they read:

Ya que soy muy visual tengo que ver imágenes o videos o algo que me ayude a entender más el texto. Es muy necesario para mí ver dibujos, imágenes o no sé, mapas mentales o algo así para tener más clara la idea y no tener tanta información, y solamente como que los puntos clave.

I am a visual learner, I have to see images or videos, something to help me to understand the text better. Therefore, it is necessary for me to see draws, images or mind maps, something like that so I can have a better idea and not to read too much information and only the key words. P2

Las tablas me ayudaron porque son como un resumen por decirlo así. En esa tabla es más entendible.

The charts helped me because they are like a summary and I could understand it better. P4

Leí las tablas porque necesitaba dar un resumen, porque tenía que explicar esa parte del párrafo. Entonces sí la tuve que leer para darles ideas a mis compañeros de qué trataba.

I read the chart because I needed to make a summary and explain that part of the reading; that is why, I read it so I could give my classmates a summary. P5

Other participants shared that they made use of their previous knowledge to understand better the text:

Solo leí la información que necesitaba, o sea, ya tenía conocimiento de ciertos aspectos de control de clase, materiales y algo así. Entonces me enfoqué en buscar las respuestas y complementar un poco con lo que había en el texto.

I didn't read everything, I only read the information I needed because I had previous knowledge about classroom management strategies, materials and so on; that is why, I tried to focus on the answers of the questionnaire and add a little bit of information of the text. P3

Leía el primer párrafo y hacía mi anotación para que no se me olvidara, leía el segundo y me acordaba de algunas cosas que encontraba relación con cosas como la vida cotidiana o experiencias que ya tenía acerca del texto y cosas así para que no me confundiera con la información de los siguientes párrafos.

I read the first paragraph and made a note so I didn't forget it, then I read the second and remembered some things that I found had a relationship with daily life or experiences I had about the text and other things like that so I didn't get confused with the information of the next paragraphs. P5

Some others shared that they read a paragraph or the text several times to comprehend it better:

Cuando encontraba las palabras que no sabía el significado o incluso palabras muy largas pues sí tenía que leer como dos o tres veces el párrafo y entender la idea del párrafo.

When I found words I didn't understand or words that were too long, I reread the paragraph two or three times and tried to understand the idea. P3

Releía el texto mínimo dos veces porque de por sí siempre con todos los textos, si al principio no le entiendo o no creo haberle entendido bien, lo vuelvo a leer. En la segunda me concentro y capto todas las ideas.

I reread the text at least two times because with all the texts I usually don't understand them at the beginning or if I thought I didn't understand it, I reread it again and in the second time I concentrate better and comprehend all the main ideas. P5

Finally, other participants read the headings and subheadings to get an idea of the text:

El tema lo dice y aparte por los subtemas que tiene. Eso es lo que me hizo darme la idea de qué iba a tratar y a comprender más y buscar más información acerca de esos subtemas.

It's in the topic and also in the subtopics, with that I realized what it was going to be about and to understand more and to search more information about those subtopics. P4

Leí los subtítulos, eran palabritas clave; no eran muchas, pero era como que lo que más me guiaba.

I read the subheadings which I believe were main words; there weren't a lot but I used them to guide me through the text. P5

4.5 Other Strategies Students Use

This section shows strategies that students mentioned in the interview to use while reading an academic text. These strategies were not present in the questionnaire however it is believed that they are important to mention because it shows how students create new strategies to help them to overcome problems while reading. They are shown in the following graph.

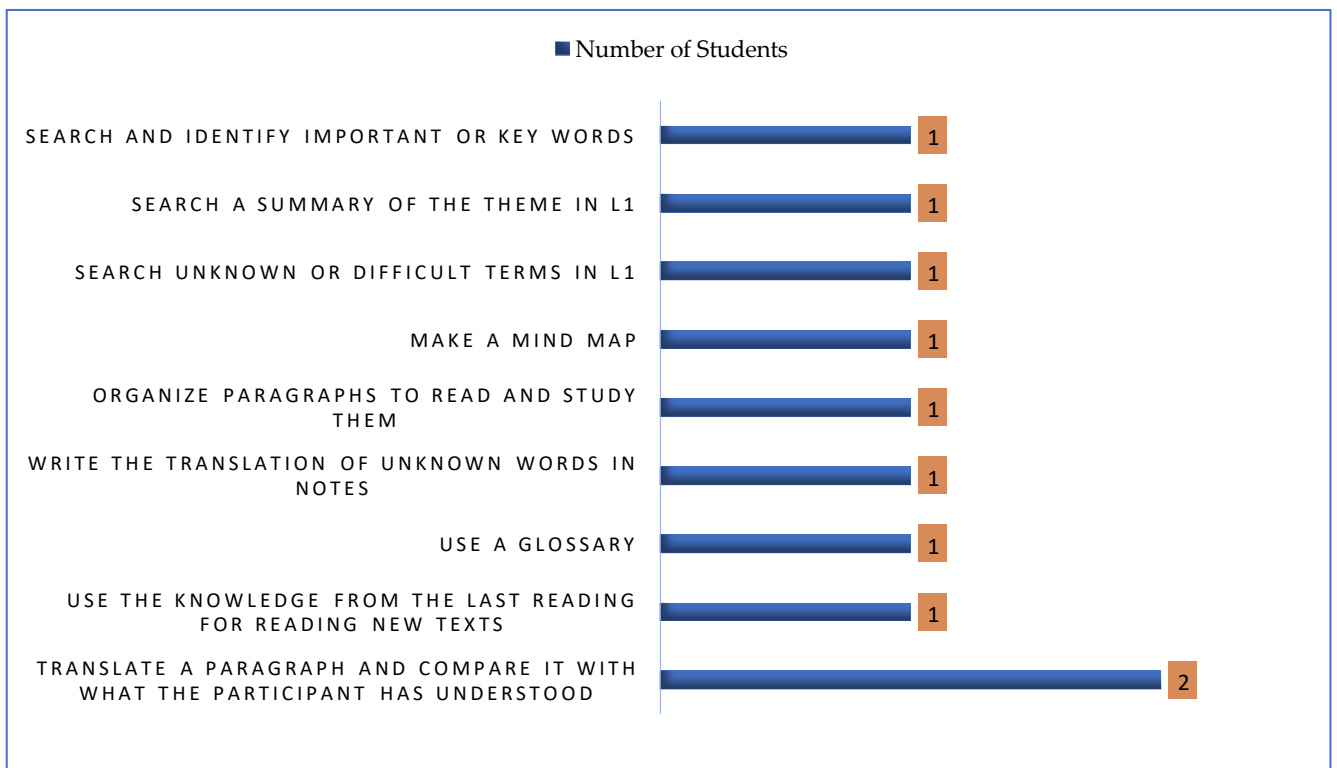


Fig. 4.6 Reading Strategies that Students Mentioned

The strategies mentioned by students (n=6) were: *Search a summary of the theme in L1, search unknown or difficult terms in L1, use a glossary, search and identify important or key words, write the translation of unknown words in notes, organize paragraphs to read and study them, finally make a*

mind map with 1 student each one. Also *Translate a paragraph and compare it with what the participant has understood* with 2 students for that strategy.

Participants 1 and 4 shared that they translated parts of the text because they wanted to verify if what they understood while reading the text was correct or not:

Lo primero que hice fue tratar de leerlo utilizando un diccionario y trataba de entender qué decía más o menos. Como mi nivel de inglés estaba muy mal terminé utilizando un traductor, pero eso fue hasta el último. En el texto tengo muchas palabras subrayadas ya que traté de entenderlo primero con el conocimiento que tenía junto con mi diccionario y hasta el último traduje el texto. Solo traduje una parte para comparar si había entendido el texto o si no lo había entendido bien. P1

First, I tried to read it making use of a dictionary, and I tried to understand more or less what it says. Because at that time my English level was low I ended up using a translator, but that was at the end. I have a lot of underlined words on the text because I tried to understand it with the knowledge I had and later I translated the text. I only translated a part of the text to check if I understood it right or not.

Había veces en las que traducía el texto a español. Aunque es algo que uno no debería hacer a propósito, uno lo hace. Yo sé que esa no es la idea, pero a veces no se puede evitar. P4

There were times in which I translated the text to Spanish. Although this is something one shouldn't do, you just do it. I know that is not the idea but sometimes it cannot be helped.

Also, participant 4 expressed that the vocabulary from the text she was reading helped her to understand texts that she read further:

De este texto me sirvió el vocabulario ya que había muchas palabras que desconocía su significado y pues eso me ayudó también a poder entender tanto ese como otros textos después P4

I found useful the vocabulary I learned from this text because there were so many words I didn't know and this helped me to understand other texts I read later.

Participant 1 stated that she made use of the glossary her book had, and with that she could understand better the text:

No accedí a otras fuentes porque en el libro que nos dio la maestra, traía un glosario. Entonces en la parte de atrás estaban los conceptos más importantes o las

definiciones más importantes y venían más reducidas y un poquito más fácil de entender. P1

I didn't search other resources because the book had a glossary. At the back there was the glossary with the most important concepts or the definitions and they were summarized and easier to understand.

Another participant (4) mentioned that she searched for the words she thought were important to understand the text:

Lo que hice con el texto fue leerlo y buscar las palabras que no entendía o más bien, las palabras que creí eran las palabras clave además de las palabras que no entendía porque hay varias palabras que eran desconocidas para mí, entonces por eso fue que las busqué, para entenderle más al texto y a lo que dice. P4

When I read the text, I searched for the words I didn't understand, I mean, the ones I thought were key words and also the ones I didn't understand well because there were some I didn't know. So that is why I searched them, to understand better the text.

Participant 6 stated that she made use of post-its as an aid to remember key words or important concepts:

Antes solo escribía las palabras o los conceptos clave que me ayudaban a hacer resúmenes o que pensé que me podían servir. Usaba post-it para escribirlos y no usaba un color en específico, y si tenía uno lo usaba y ponía palabras clave. A veces eran ideas o a veces palabras, pero sí, los post-it me ayudaban. P6

I used to write the words or the key concepts that helped me to make summaries. I wrote them on post-it and didn't have a specific colour for them. Sometimes I wrote ideas or words in them and they really helped me a lot.

For participant 5, she shared that writing comments next to each paragraph helped her to understand it and write the appropriated notes:

Me acuerdo que leía el primer párrafo y hacía mi anotación junto al párrafo para que no se me olvidara y luego seguía con el segundo y me acordaba de algunas cosas con las que encontraba relación con ese párrafo, relación con la vida cotidiana o experiencias que ya tenía acerca del texto y cosas así. Lo leía párrafo por párrafo y hacía mis anotaciones en cada uno para que no me confundiera con la información de los siguientes párrafos. P5

I remember I read the first paragraph and wrote my notes next to it so I didn't forget my thoughts, then I read the next one and if I remember something related to it like everyday life thoughts or experiences about the text I wrote them next to it. I read paragraph by paragraph and made notes next to each one of them so I didn't confuse the information with the next paragraph and write other things.

Participant 6 mentioned that making a mind map of the text she was reading helped her to understand it better:

Recuerdo que tuve que hacer notas sobre el texto. Aparte de que hice un resumen traté de hacer un mapa conceptual con los conceptos para entenderlos mejor porque tenía que explicarlo y de igual manera para que mis compañeros lo entendieran mejor. P6

I remember I have to write notes about the text, besides I wrote a summary and I tried to do a mind map so I could understand the concepts better because I had to explain them to my classmates.

Also, participant 6 shared that she searched the meaning and more information about concepts in her native language that she did not understand:

Sí le iba entendiendo al texto, pero había conceptos nuevos para mí que no conocía, entonces sí se me complicó. Por ejemplo, había un término que, en inglés, es wash back, y lo leí varias veces y no entendía, por lo que lo tuve que buscar en español ya que no entendía a qué se refería. Busqué más que nada eso, conceptos que ni siquiera con la lectura entendí. P6

I understood the text however there were new concepts I hadn't seen before. For example, there was a concept called wash back and I read it several times but I didn't understand it, that is why I had to search it on Spanish. I mostly searched concepts I didn't understand in context with the text.

Likewise, participant 6 also mentioned that she searched for summaries in her native language:

Hay veces en las que busco un resumen en español para entenderle más rápido porque luego encuentro resúmenes en inglés que tienen otro tipo de vocabulario que tampoco entiendo y tengo que buscar aparte de ese resumen las palabras que no entendía en aquel entonces. Entonces es más fácil buscarlo en español. P6

Sometimes I try to search a summary in Spanish so I can understand it quickly because when I search them on English they have another type of vocabulary which I also don't understand. So, besides searching for the summary I also have to search the unknown words and that is why it was easier for me to search them on Spanish.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of this study from the questionnaires and the interviews which showed with evidence students' opinions about the reading strategies, if they were aware of them, the decision making of which one to use and how to select and choose the appropriated one to overcome the problems they found on the texts. Moreover, students' comments showed a great support to the results from the questionnaires and also enhance the results of this study. Finally, it is important to mention that cataloguing of the results was supported using the observations done by the researcher involved in the whole study. In the following chapter, the conclusions are provided.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research questions, accomplishment of research aims, limitation of the study, further research, a personal reflection, and final comments of the study.

5.1 Findings and Discussion

This investigation examined the reading strategies students use before and while reading an academic text. It also wanted to research if students know how to use them and how they decide which one to use. Therefore, after gathering the results of a questionnaire and an interview they were analyzed with the help of the research questions. The first one states as follow:

1. What reading strategies do ELT students employ or implement before and while they read a text? How do they use them?

To answer this question, first, a questionnaire was administered to 40 students. It was found out that five statements got the highest scores for the strategies students use before reading an academic text. 30 (n=40) students made *use of previous knowledge* and *preview the text to see what is about*. 28 students said that they *think of the difficulties they might have* and 25 *decide what to read closely and what to ignore*. Lastly, 12 students agreed with the statement response *I have a purpose in mind*.

To have a deeper comprehension of students' decision of what reading strategies they use and why an interview was conducted. Six students accepted an interview and the responses they provided were varied and while some were similar to the questionnaire others differed. Interviewed students responded that the most used strategies they use before reading were the following: *I have a purpose in mind (3)*, *use of previous knowledge (3)*, *decide what to read and what to ignore* and *preview the text to see what is about (3)*. Finally, one student answered that she *thinks of the difficulties she may have* before reading an academic text.

In addition, other researchers, who which have also investigated a similar topic, have shown akin results, Al-Mekhlafi (2018) in the study called *EFL Learners Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies* by. To measure his data, the researched used a Likert scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) with which he measured his respondents' data and concluded that the most used strategies by their respondents were: *I have a purpose in mind when I read (3.6)* and *I think about what I know to help me understand what I read (3.58)*.

Similarly, in *Metacognitive Awareness of Academic reading strategies*, Yüksel (2011) stated that one of his most used strategies was *Previewing text before reading (4.50)* and that it was a strategy that students reported as "always" when reading.

About the strategies used by students while reading a text, 32 students *Identified important information with key aids (boldface, in italics,*

underlined) with, 30 students *read fast or slow according to their pace, adjust reading speed and stop from time to time to think about what they were reading, stop reading to reflect in the information.* Next 29 students *reread to make sense*, 28 students *used a dictionary when they faced unknown words* and finally 21 students *highlighted or underlined important information, Translate to L1 (word by word), use a translate app or web page (for unknown words/phrases).*

To support the results from the questionnaire and have a deeper comprehension of students' responses an interview was applied and from there the results are as follow: *reread to make sense* with 5 students, *use a dictionary when face unknown words* (4), *lastly identify important information with key aids (boldface, in italics, underlined)* (3) and *highlight underline important information and translate to L1* (3).

After analyzing and classifying the answers from participants, the strategies with the highest scores were mentioned in chapter 4. The conclusion drawn from these answers were compared with the results from other studies. It was found that the strategies from this research also came out in other works. One of them was EFL Learners Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies (2008) by Al-Mekhlafi. Here the author mentions the following Reading Strategies with the highest scores: I use reference material, such as a dictionary to help me understand what I read, I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it. He also

mentioned others such as Adjusting reading rate and re-reading for better understanding. Finally, Al-Mekhlafi mentions other important strategies: adjusting reading rate and paying close attention to reading.

Similarly, LaHuerta in *L2 Students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and its relationship to reading comprehension* (1993) mentions some strategies that got the highest scores which are similar to the results found in this research. The strategies are the following: re-read the problematic part (71.2%) and look up unknown words in the dictionary (60.4%).

In addition, several students mentioned in the interview strategies that they used after reading. The results are the following: 26 students mentioned that they take notes after reading and 25 mentioned that they integrate comments from other people after reading the text. These two strategies were also mentioned in the interview with students saying that in class they shared what they understood with classmates and that the teacher explained some things from the text and while doing this they took notes to complement what they understood from the text.

Furthermore, 4 interviewed students mentioned that they also searched more information about the topic in English, others mentioned that they searched in their mother tongue because even if they searched in English and tried to understand it in that language, it was still too difficult for their level so they opted to search more about it, but in their L1.

To answer the second research question the responses from the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed.

RQ2 Are students aware of the reading strategies? If so, how?

In the questionnaire students were asked directly their point of view about reading strategies awareness and how they used them. Students who were interviewed were not asked directly about it, instead their answers were inferred from what they talked about.

First, the questionnaire' responses were analyzed. Some students expressed that the reading strategies helped them to understand better the text and to make it easier to read. Others answered that knowing strategies helped them to organize better the text, to spend less time reading the text and to enjoy the process. Likewise, other students expressed that they know reading is about understanding the meaning of the text and therefore knowing and using reading strategies helps them to achieve their purpose with the text.

Similarly, in the interview, students shared their views about reading strategies and how they realized they were important in reading. Some students commented that they found difficulties while reading therefore they decided to use some strategies to get a better comprehension of the text and fulfil their original aim. Some of the problems they mentioned were that even if they tried to read the text without any help, they would always find words

from which they did not understand their meaning, so they decided to use certain strategies to grasp the meaning of those words.

Finally, some students shared that some reading strategies that helped them to overcome reading difficulties and made the reading easier were the following: make use of previous knowledge, read a paragraph several times and identify the headings and subheadings to get an idea of the text. Also, others expressed that they complemented the ideas they got from the text with information provided by their classmates and teacher.

In the interviews noteworthy information was obtained about other reading strategies that students used and were not mentioned in chapter 2 of this research: search and identify important or key words, search a summary of the theme in L1, search unknown or difficult terms in L1, make a mind map, organize paragraphs to read and study them, write the translation of unknown words in notes, use a glossary, use the knowledge from the last reading for reading new texts, translate a paragraph and compare it with what the participant has understood.

As mentioned before, students found different types of problems while reading thus while the strategies they mentioned were compared with the ones mentioned in chapter 2 and in other studies, it was interesting to note that they mentioned other strategies that were not present in these two sources.

5.2 Accomplishment of Research Aims

For this study the research aims presented in Chapter I will be presented here, together with an explanation if they were accomplished or not:

1. To investigate the strategies students use before and while reading an academic text.

As stated in point 5.1, students' information about what type of strategies they used before reading and also what type of preparation they made before reading an academic text was gathered. Therefore, this aim was accomplished

- 2-To analyze how students, use the before and while reading strategies.

Students' answers from the questionnaire in chapter 4 led me analyze which type of strategy they used more. This was important so I could compare those responses with the ones from the interviews. There, students explained more how they selected them, how they use them and even how they adapted them to their necessities.

- 3-To explore students' awareness of reading strategies.

As stated previously, students provided information about how they choose the strategies for the different stages of reading. According to Lahuerta (2016), in chapter 2 (p.15), awareness refers to students telling

apart which strategies are most useful for them. They also make use of them consciously to overcome any type of difficulty they encountered in the reading. Therefore, analyzing students' answers in the interviews, it can be inferred that students made a conscious use of strategies because they chose the most appropriated one for each different problem they encountered and they even developed new strategies that helped them to comprehend the text and fulfil their reading goal.

4- To analyze how students use those reading strategies.

In point 3, it was stated that students are conscious of reading strategies and their use. In the interviews they explained how they identified which type of problem they had with the reading and then they selected the most appropriated strategies or strategy that could help them to overcome it. Some of them also explained how at the beginning of their language learning, they used a lot of strategies; however, when they felt they became more proficient in the language they stopped using some of them and later they decided to make use of other types of strategies. In addition, they mentioned that they found very few difficulties when reading other texts.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations while doing this investigation. The first was that the questionnaire was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I had some problems to find and ask the permission of the

teachers to administer the questionnaire. Later I needed to select some of the students to interview them. But it was difficult to get in contact with them by email. I think that interviewing face to face is easier but because of the restrictions that was not possible. I was lucky and interviewed six students; however, I think that with more interviews, I could have gathered more information. Another problem was that I had little experience interviewing; therefore, I think that with more practice I could have asked other types of questions to collect more detailed data.

Another limitation was that, while making this research I noticed that it could have been interesting to apply a reading exercise to some students, and then interview them to get more truthful answers that did not depend so much on the students' memories. However as stated before, the restrictions did not permit this type of interactions in a classroom or face to face.

5.4 Further Research

I think that reading in a second language is a very wide topic. One of the future directions I think that can be derive from this research could be the importance of knowing reading strategies, especially during elementary language courses. Therefore, I think this topic should be researched in the first year of second language learning and measure if students who have a meta cognitive knowledge of reading strategies in their first language improve in their second language level or viceversa.

Another idea for further research can be to carry out a reading workshop where students could learn and become aware of reading strategies and see if they have any progress in their reading comprehension and in their English level.

5.5 Personal Reflection

The process of doing this thesis was very challenging. I had different experiences which have changed my perspective about research and have helped me to grow up as an investigator. For this reason, I would like to write a personal reflection about the process of this research. First, I will write about the first ideas for this project, then about the development of the research. Later, I will describe the final process to end this thesis. Finally, I will explain how writing and researching for this project has changed my perspective of investigation in a personal way.

In one of my literature classes I noticed that a lot of my classmates struggled with reading. I thought it was because of the subject, however, I started to pay attention to other courses and noticed that when a reading exercise appeared, a lot of students had problems with it. This inspired me to investigate why many students had problems with reading because it was a very important in each subject. Then, I noticed some of my classmates used some reading strategies and how they were a helpful tool to overcome reading problems.

Therefore, I thought about my own reading-learning process, and asked myself, if I had faced any type of reading problem and what I did when I encountered them in a text. While I could not carry out this research with my classmates, I used the suggestion of my thesis director and I did the study with students of advanced English level and carried out this investigation.

During the process of the research, it was a challenge to write the questions for the questionnaire and the interview. I had to research similar studies and when reading them I noticed how I used the majority of them without knowing they were strategies. Later, while doing the interviews I was surprised by the responses of the students because they tried to resolve the problems they faced and searched for a solution to overcome them.

Finally, by doing this research the knowledge I had about reading strategies and how to conduct a case study research has broadened. In the case of my knowledge of reading strategies, now I know that any simple action that students do that help them or make it easier to understand a text or to fulfil their goal can be a strategy; therefore, there are many options they can use. My knowledge of what is a case study, how to make one and the difference between it and other type of researches also increased. For example, I realized that it was important to know the point of view of students, or in other words their experience, about how they overcome their

reading problems. Also, I became aware that a case study can use qualitative and quantitative methods since both of them can provide more information that can help with the analysis of the situation. Finally authors such as, Eysenck (in Flyvbjerg 2006) mentioned something that I consider important: “look carefully at individual cases- not in the hope of providing anything, but rather in the hope of learning something”. Likewise, Starman (2013) expressed that “case studies can contribute to the professional development of a researcher, as case studies can provide concrete, context-dependent experience that increases their research skills”

Reading is one of the things I enjoy the most; therefore, to know more about how helpful reading strategies are when learning a foreign language has made me realize that acquiring an advanced level in a foreign language is not impossible.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Metacognitive Reading Strategies

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data about the metacognitive reading strategies used to understand a text in English. Veracity in your answers is very important to analyze the data. Please, answer it objectively with the responses that identify you the most. **There are no correct or incorrect answers.** The data collected will be used confidentially.

This questionnaire is divided into three sections, the first section refers to the use of reading strategies **BEFORE** reading a text and the second section is for the use of reading strategies **WHILE** you are reading. Last section contains questions about different topics involved in reading.

1. Which of the following strategies do you use **before** reading a text in English:

	Yes	No
Have a purpose in mind		
Think of the difficulties I might have to fully comprehend the text		
Use previous knowledge to comprehend the text		

Preview the text to see what it is about		
Think if the text is going to fit my purpose		
Decide what to read closely and what to ignore		
Use visual aids to guess what the text is going to be about		

2. Choose from a scale from 0 (the lowest) to 3 (the highest)

While reading a text in English, how often do you:

	0	1	2	3
think about previous information related to the text?				
make predictions?				
identify important information with key aids (boldface, in italics, underlined)?				
easily recognize the main ideas?				
take notes in the margins of what you consider important?				
write a summary of the text?				
use imagination or visualize the information of the text you are reading?				
clarify doubts about the text by rereading what was not clear?				
integrate comments or information that the teacher or classmates make?				
use a dictionary when you face unknown words?				
highlight important information assigning different colors to each/different concepts (key words, main ideas, etc.)?				
check your understanding when you come across conflicting information?				

Read the next statements and choose the answer that suits you the most

1. When the text becomes difficult I translate to L1 word by word

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

2. When the text becomes difficult I read aloud

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

3. When the text becomes difficult I stop reading to reflect about the information being learned

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

4. When the text becomes difficult I evaluate if the content of the text is interesting

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

5. When the text becomes difficult I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

6. When the text becomes difficult I reread to make sense

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

7. When the text becomes difficult I pay closer attention to what I am reading

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

8. When the text becomes difficult I read carefully and slowly

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

9. When the text becomes difficult I try to get back on track when I lose concentration

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

10. When the text becomes difficult I read fast or slow according to my pace

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

11. When the text becomes difficult I stop from time to time to think about what I am reading

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

12. When the text becomes difficult I keep reading without understanding

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

13. When the text becomes difficult I skim the text (first by noting characteristics like length and organization).

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

14. When the text becomes difficult I scan the text (reading rapidly in order to find specific information)

Never

Rarely

Often

Always

3. Read the following questions and try to answer giving details (writing examples and the reason). There is no limit of length.

1. Who do you **ask about what was not clear** to you in the reading? (for ex: teacher, classmates etc.)

2. How do you **feel** when you do not comprehend a text?

3. How do you think **reading strategies** (skimming, scanning, preview etc.) help you in reading comprehension?

4. **What do you do** when the text you are reading is not interesting, too long or simply you did not understand it?

5. How do you think **being aware** of knowing reading strategies and how to use them (metacognitive strategies) help you in reading comprehension?

Appendix B

Below are some questions asked in the interview:

For what purpose did you use this material?

Did it help you to achieve your goal?

Did you have any problems to understand the material?

How did you overcome these problems?

Do you usually read?

If so, what type of materials do you read?